ON AUGUST 5, 1924 IN THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS A NEW COMIC STRIP MADE ITS DEBUT. IT FEATURED A LITTLE REDHEADED ORPHAN, HER DOG, AND THE BILLIONAIRE WHO ADOPTS HER. THE COMIC STRIP RAN IN NEWSPAPERS DAILY FOR THE NEXT 86 YEARS UNTIL 2014 AND SPAWNEO A RADIO SHOW, FIVE FILM ADAPTATIONS, AND IN 1977, A HIT BROADWAY MUSICAL.

The little girl in the strip was of course Little Orphan Annie and the musical was called ANNIE. It ran for six years on Broadway and won seven Tony Awards including Best Musical. It’s had a number of sold out tours, a smash run in the West End in London, two Broadway revivals, and this summer we will be presenting our fifth production of this classic show. I can’t wait to direct it again and I can’t wait for you to come see it.

What is it about that feisty, red-headed kid that keeps audiences coming back again and again?

It is all of those things and more.

ANNIE is a gem shining with hope and happiness. I know that sounds a bit much but I mean it. ANNIE is one of those shows that force us to bring forth the joy that is in all of us. You just cannot watch this musical without smiling and feeling that no matter what turmoil churns outside the theatre, if we hold on to Annie’s optimism and hope for tomorrow we can weather the hard times around us.

I love presenting ANNIE. It makes me feel good. It makes me smile and laugh. And that is why that little red-headed orphan has entertained and delighted people for 95 years and will continue to do so for many tomorrows to come.

"You just cannot watch this musical without smiling . . ."
– Ed Flesch
The original 1977 Broadway production ran for 2,377 performances and won 7 Tony Awards including Best Musical, Best Book of a Musical, Best Original Score, and Best Choreography. Successful revivals premiered in 1997 and 2012. As to our own history with ANNIE, this will be our 5th production including the 2004 edition where these photos are from.

While certainly appropriate for children, this is NOT a "kid's show." Set during the Depression it speaks to everyone from those old enough to remember that, to 50-somethings who enjoyed the original run, and everyone in between.

The most memorable song, "Tomorrow," is an anthem of hope for today as much as it has ever been. "The sun'll come out tomorrow. Bet your bottom dollar that tomorrow, there'll be sun . . . " So it makes no difference if you've seen ANNIE before or not, its message of hope and optimism is what you need today, and you won't find a better production of it anywhere else!
Back in 1977 (the same year ANNIE opened on Broadway), Tom Westlund moved from East DePere to Marinette, WI and (with the help of the bank, he honestly pointed out), purchased the local school bus company and their 19 buses. Marinette is a small city north of Green Bay where Wisconsin meets the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Now with 40 school buses and three motorcoaches, he runs the routes for the Marinette School District and helps serve all the surrounding towns in Wisconsin and Michigan with extra curricular busing. They also run Taxi Inc., a shared ride taxi program for the city of Marinette, and have another office in Brillion, WI.

Westlund Bus has been bringing guests to The Fireside for nearly 30 years. Since it’s close to a four hour drive they typically make a coffee stop around Oshkosh. Other popular trips include Brewers games, shows at Green Bay’s Weidner Center and Appleton’s Performing Arts Center, as well as longer trips to Branson, the Canadian Rockies, East Coach fall color tours, and West Coast trips such as Albuquerque’s Balloon Festival. Tom drives as needed and does enjoy taking a couple of long trips each year. He’s seen a lot of America he wouldn’t otherwise have been able to enjoy. So even though his childhood dream was to be an astronaut, he figures now that he would do things the same all over again if he had the chance.

Tom believes in giving his travelers the very best service he can for the most reasonable price. “Up here in Northern Wisconsin the money flows a little slower. They also run Taxi Inc., a shared ride taxi program for the city of Marinette, and have another office in Brillion, WI.

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There are a few concepts Tom doesn’t seem to know much about - the idea of retirement, what a vacation is, and “free time.” He has, however, given a lot of his “free time” to the Wisconsin School Bus Association and the Wisconsin Motorcoach Association for the last 40 years. I’m sure his longevity and experience are greatly appreciated. He was also quick to praise his entire team and that the story of Westlund Bus wasn’t just about him. It’s a team effort up in Marinette and we’re proud to play a role in serving his guests!

“We believe in giving the very best service at the most reasonable price.”
– Tom Westlund
MORE REASONS TO LOVE "ANNIE"

Introducing Willow in the Supporting Role of Sandy!

We're proud to introduce one of the crowd-favorite supporting characters in this summer's production of ANNIE. The role of Sandy will be played by Willow, shown here with her human, Patty Beran.

Willow is an American Kennel Club Champion and also has her Companion Dog title. She a five year old Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever. Her grandmother, Ginger, played the role of Sandy in our 2011 production of ANNIE and also appeared in LEGALLY BLONDE. Willow, besides preparing for her role in ANNIE, was recently photographed for some potential advertising work with Target and Kohl's.

Patty, whose mother was a long-time associate in our gift shops when she was growing up, has had several successful runs at The Fireside. She also brought us Misty who played Sandy in the 2004 production of ANNIE and Justine, the adorable chihuahua who appeared in both LEGALLY BLONDE and MARY POPPINS.

Willow was extremely well behaved and lovable during her recent interview for the role. We look forward to having her join us this summer!

"You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile!"

One of the most memorable songs in ANNIE is "You're Never Fully Dressed Without A Smile." The charming lyrics include "Who cares what they're wearing on Main Street or Saville Row, It's what you wear from ear to ear and not from head to toe that matters." We take that advice seriously here at The Fireside.

It's no secret that the first step to great customer service is a genuine smile and greeting. It's also common not to get them at every business you enter.

Here at The Fireside we pride ourselves on letting you know how much we appreciate your choosing to spend the day with us. Occasionally we're asked how we train everyone to be so nice, but actually we just hire nice people to begin with. Sharing our smiles is just one of the details. Our sales staff even have mirrors on their walls so they can make sure they're smiling when they talk to you on the phone.

On a recent walk through the building it was easy to find lots of smiling faces along the way. They’re all eagerly awaiting your next arrival!

There are lots of good reasons to smile. Studies show that smiling can increase your confidence by up to 10%. It improves your mood and therefore your attitude as you face everyday situations. It can also lower your blood pressure and boost your immune system. Plus, smiling is contagious. So crack a smile now and reap all the amazing benefits. Now you're fully dressed!
Hi everyone! Since ANNIE is a great show to bring along your grandchildren, I’d like to share some info about the children’s meal offered to guests age 14 and under in place of the adult featured meal. The first course is a Fresh Fruit Salad, followed by dinner featuring boneless Chicken Tenderloin Strips dipped in a Tempura Batter and deep fried. The sides include our house made Macaroni and Cheese, Corn and Green Beans, and a Chocolate Sundae made with a house made Vanilla Bean Custard, Fresh Whipped Cream and a Cherry. Youth attending Thursday evenings and Sunday matinees dine from the buffet except for this Salad and Dessert.

The Sunday Brunch Buffet is another great menu for all ages. For starters at your table, we present you with a plate of pastries to nibble on, as well as a Fresh Fruit Salad with Honey Wine Dressing, Yogurt (chef’s choice), and Granola. In the fall and winter we switch that up with a Fresh Fruit Smoothie.) Along with the many Fireside favorites on our Buffet, we change the Beef Tenderloin dish, the Breakfast Potatoes, and one of our carved meats. We also alternate between Buttermilk Pancakes and Bread Pudding with a Vanilla Whiskey Sauce. It’s hard to do, but be sure to save room for dessert! If you have had the opportunity to try our Sunday brunch yet, I highly recommend it. Yummm!!

The Thursday Evening Signature Buffet begins with our Signature Salad topped with Papaya Chutney Dressing and served with Freshly Baked Breads. Enjoy two special entree selections in addition to Beef Tenderloin and Roast Turkey from the Carving Station, Barbecued Pork Back Ribs, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Biscuits and Sausage Gravy, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Sweet Potato Soufflé, Whipped Idaho Potatoes and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Blueberry Crisp for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

The Sunday Matinee Brunch begins with an assortment of Quick Breads and Pastries from our Bakery to enjoy with our Honey Glazed Fresh Fruit Medley with Yogurt and Natural Granola. We’ll be carving Jones Hickory Smoked Ham and Roast Turkey Breast along with the buffet of Eggs Benedict on Jones Canadian Bacon, Scrambled Eggs, Crisp Bacon, Maple Sausage Links, Chicken Tenderloin Tempura with Brandied Apricot Sauce, Biscuits and Sausage Gravy, Fresh Atlantic Salmon, Buttermilk Pancakes, Breakfast Potatoes, a featured Beef Tenderloin dish, and Roasted Farm Fresh Vegetables. Blueberry Crisp for dessert plus coffee, tea and milk are included.

*Saturday Evening’s menu also includes an Appetizer course.

ANNIE
Featured Menu - July 18 - September 1, 2019
Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday Matinees, Saturday Evenings*, and Sunday Middays.

Signature Salad
Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Honeydew, Kiwi, Strawberries, and Oranges over Fresh Garden Greens, sprinkled with Sesame Croutons and our famous Papaya Chutney Dressing.

Freshly Baked Breads from our Artisan Bakery

Prezzel Crusted Stuffed Chicken
Skinless Breast of Chicken stuffed with Havarti Cheese, dipped in egg, rolled in Pretzel Crumbs, sautéed to a golden brown, and baked, served with a Balsamic Raspberry Sauce. Accompanied by Garlic Parmesan Orzo and Fresh Broccoli and Cauliflower.

Blueberry Crisp
Fresh Blueberries baked with Port Wine and Brown Sugar Streusel, served warm with our Homemade Vanilla Bean Custard.

Coffee, Tea and Milk
HELLO GROUP LEADERS!

I can’t believe how time is flying by, yet winter is hanging on. Challenging may be not be strong enough to describe how some of you group leaders feel about this winter weather. Thank you to all of you who worked so hard to rebook into another date and a couple of you that had to rebook one more time. Those three weeks at the end of January had some of the worst weather we have encountered, and it all fell on Wednesday and Thursday matinees. I am delighted we could get as many of you as possible back to see LEGENDS OF COUNTRY. Now THINK SPRING!

ANNIE is indeed returning. Yes, you may have seen it before but the message and joy this show brings along with laugh after laugh makes it a show you always leave with a smile. How can you see it too often? Plus being a redhead, I am partial to ANNIE . . . let’s hear it for all us redheads with spunk! Be sure to read about our furry actress. Dogs are so wonderful and always bring a smile. While all our meals are delicious the featured entree of Pretzel Chicken is one of our most popular meals, sure to make you smile. Yes, I have used “smile” a bit but this show is all about smiles and our staff is here to continue that with our smiles. We have pictures to prove it!

I would be remiss if I did not try tempt you to consider squeezing in a booking for MENOPAUSE THE MUSICAL (April 11 thru May 26) maybe for a new group of ladies that come by cars? We did not offer a Live Band show in 2018 so don’t wait too long to book for THAT’S WHAT I CALL ROCK AND ROLL (featuring a new entree, Chicken Bruschetta). Steve Watts . . . need I say more?

After ANNIE consider adding in BUDDY (Roast Boneless Pork Chop) or A CHRISTMAS STORY (Beef and Bird). (Tell you a secret: The Fireside is the only time I have eaten pork roast that rivals my mother’s. Delicious) I have some great seats left for December as I know you love to visit then. Check in with Franki or me.

Happy Travels.

For personal help with any of your bookings, call me at 800-477-9505 or email groupsales@firesidetheatre.com.

*Spring is nature way of saying let’s party.* - - Robin Williams
WHEN YOU THINK OF THE BEST KITCHEN AROMAS, BAKING APPLES HAVE TO BE AMONG THE MOST WONDERFUL.
THEY'RE USUALLY PAIRED WITH CINNAMON WHICH ONLY HELPS MAKE THEM MORE TANTALIZING! DECORATING
YOUR KITCHEN WITH APPLE THEMED LINENS AND TABLEWARE IS A FUN WAY TO HINT AT THE APPLE HARVEST
SEASON AND ALL THE DELICIOUSNESS THAT BRINGS.

In Celebration of Apples and Harvest!

While browsing through The Fireside Gift Shops this summer and fall you’ll discover a delightful selection of apple, orchard, and harvest decor including towels, aprons, potholders and mitts plus plates, platters, bowls, and mugs.

You’ll also find dip mixes from Country Home Creations including Apple Cherry and Caramel Apple. These mixes are simple to make, often with just one or two other ingredients and need just a few hours to chill before serving with crackers, cookies, pretzels, vanilla wafers, or apples. The packages also come with recipes for other uses such as cakes, pies, and even salads. All in all this nearly 40 year old Michigan company has created over 100 different gourmet mixes using premium ingredients.
Groups are our specialty - visit early to get the best discount!

What is a group?

At The Fireside, there are many benefits for any group of 18 or more people attending a performance. You can hold seating with a small deposit while you finalize your exact count, due a few weeks before your visit. You'll also qualify for a discounted ticket price and your meal gratuity is included.

For weekday matinees, 18 paid tickets earns a complimentary package, for all other shows it's every 21st ticket. There is plenty of safe, free parking on-site for coaches. The Fireside is accessible to guests with disabilities; just let us know what special needs you have when making reservations.

- You can save over 20% with a group booking over individual ticket prices.
- The three-course dinner and show for groups of 18 or more in 2019 is $73.80 ($69.95 tax exempt) per person.
- PREMIER GROUP RATE offers an additional discount of $3.00 per person when your group attends a performance of ANNIE from July 18 - August 11, 2019.
- 2019 Premier Group Rate is $70.63 ($66.95 tax exempt) per person.
- The four-course Saturday Night Group rate in 2019 is $78.02 ($73.95 tax exempt) per person. For rates on optional entree selections call Group Sales.
- 2019 Premier Saturday Night Group Rate is $74.85 ($70.95 tax exempt) per person.
- 2019 Youth Group Rates for ages 14 and under with the youth meal are offered at $52.70 ($49.95 tax exempt) per youth.
- 2019 School Group Rates are available for Mid-Week matinees as low as $64.95 tax exempt rate per student. Chaperones qualify for the Group Rate.