

'Nasty Nellie' enjoys her notoriety



Actress Alison Arngrim, who plays nasty Nellie on "Little House on the Prairie," would like "to get out of those long dresses, into something sexy and have my hair flying wildly around my face."

"I'd love to do a love scene with some real kissing, not the goody-two-shoes kind they do on "Little House on the Prairie," sighs Alison Arngrim. "I treasure playing Nellie Oleson, but it would be great to get out of those long dresses, into something sexy and have my hair flying wildly around my face."

The 18-year-old blond-haired, blue-eyed actress has been playing the role of that nasty brat (or worse!), the one who is always taunting sweet Laura Ingalls on NBC's popular series, since she was 11 years old. "When I walk down the street, people point at me and exclaim, 'There's that awful girl!'" Alison admits that at first it did upset her a bit to be called terrible and awful. "I think I even cried about it a couple of times. Now I enjoy it, because it means I'm doing a good job."



The young actress feels that part of the reason she has such a wonderful relationship with her family is because she gets all her hostilities out in her role on TV. "I can throw tantrums, be mean, spoiled, unkind and untruthful — and not pay the consequences, at least not all the time," she laughs. "Then when I get home from work, I'm ready to be nice."

Home today is a one-bedroom condominium

she just purchased about 20 minutes from her parents' home in Hollywood. She's used a lot of red and white in the decorating scheme ("I think of myself as a 'fire-y' person!") and the floor of the master bath is white tile with inlaid red tiles spelling her initials. "It's got a mirror on the whole ceiling, and the walls are tiled red," she added. "It's a real shocker when you open the door."

Now that she's 18, Alison will be spending more time on the job. "When you're a minor you're not allowed to work more than eight hours a day, but once you're legal they can keep you there all night if necessary," she sighs. "But I don't mind. I love my work, and I'm glad they are letting Nellie mature and grow up — even though she's still got her mean streak."

This season on "Little House," Alison's character will become the mother of twins. She was married at the end of last season and will give birth in one of the first shows. "I'm excited about it. Nobody knows how the children will turn out, but you can bet with Nellie as their mother they're going to be brats themselves," Alison says with a gleam in her eye.

When not in front of the "Little House" cameras, Alison spends her time doing stand-up comedy at clubs around the country. That's a little more adult, no doubt!

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Confessions of a childhood salesman



By Arlene LaRue

My career as a door-to-door salesman (salesperson?) began and ended when I was 12 years old.

I got into the peddling business because Assumption School, where I had reached the sixth grade, had no library. In fact, most grammar schools, public as well as parochial, had no library of their own in the mid 1920s.

Assumption's golden opportunity knocked when a library of a thousand books became the prize in a grocery promotion contest.

The promoter was an attractive, fast-talking gentleman who conducted the competition among the city's parochial schools.

Groceries for Books

This is how it worked: Each of certain designated brand products were worth so many points toward the library prize for the school which sold them. Proof of sale was labels cut off the products and turned over to the promoter.

Each week during the contest, names of participating schools were listed, along with the number of points each had accumulated. The competition lasted about three months. In early reports, Assumption was always near the bottom of the point list.

Our efforts got a shot in the arm the day the promotion man came in person to our school assembly and gave a pep talk. Nuns who taught us followed up his exhortations, and kept describing the conveniences a library would provide.

I had never sold anything in my life up to that time. But dutifully I took home a list of qualifying products and gave it to my mother. She checked off brands she was using and gave me cash for them. I turned the cash over to the sisters and returned home with two bags of bulging groceries. Mother and Dad both helped clip labels off our groceries, which I returned to school so we could receive our credits as quickly as possible.

First Customers

My classmates were working as hard as I selling the products, and each began with parents as targets. While we sold a number of groceries, when the next newspaper listing appeared, our school still had not garnered enough points to pull us out of the cellar.

saw the manager standing there looking us over. What he saw was Dorothy, breathless and ashen; and me with blood spurting out of my forehead.

It was the manager's turn to pale. "I forgot about the dogs," he apologized. I was given first aid for my wound and the manager removed the security dogs so we could start working in the cellar again.

Between the groceries we sold the manager and the labels we clipped in the cellar, we were able to gather a couple of thousand points.

Scar Remains

To this day, I retain a faint scar on my forehead to remind me of the incident. I wear it as a badge of honor. After all, it was a battle wound in the great library war.

Dorothy continued her eager beaver tactics, canvassing more neighbors on her side of the street, and friends and relatives who lived elsewhere.

Watching her work so hard, I began to feel guilty. So I started a door-to-door canvass on my side of the street. I, too, had a cart which I loaded with contest products. First, I tried Grandmother Reichert who lived downstairs, and met great success. I had equal success with the Snyder sisters, who lived to the right of our Lodi Street house, and the Kuechler and Diederich families, on our left.

When I approached other neighbors who lived on the northeast side of Lodi, my success faltered. I received such responses as: "Kid, don't bother me. Go on home." "What kind of skin game are you working?"

"I don't have any money for groceries." "My kids go to the public school. Why should I help Assumption?"

Doors Slammed

Often doors were slammed in my face so fast, I had no chance to get into my sales pitch.

One man, who neither spoke nor understood English, spouted a barrage of foreign words that sounded profane. Between his gesticulations and raucous grunts, I was able to figure out I had better leave his door in a hurry or some fearful fate would befall me. Then and there I decided salesmanship was

not for me. I was tired and discouraged. I had started out as an enthusiastic drum beater for Assumption Library and ended up as a scared, intimidated kid.

When I reached home with tears in my eyes and many, many products remaining in the cart, Mother took pity on me. She bought the rest of my groceries and let me clip the labels to take to school.

Sister was pleased with my contribution, even though I was not. She said all the grades had upped their sales and things looked good for Assumption in the contest.

That weekend when contest standings were listed, Assumption had ascended to third place. After two weeks of pestering relatives, who by this time were our only customers, we turned in our final reports.

"Unprecedented Victory"

Finally came the great day the contest ended. The newspaper ad read: "Assumption School wins library contest in unprecedented victory!"

I had to ask teacher what "unprecedented" meant. She explained it meant Assumption had been able to garner more points than any school in any city where the competition had been held. A cause for rejoicing, indeed.

And rejoice we did. The Monday after the announcement we were given a holiday. The student body chose to celebrate by marching north on Salina Street, carrying banners, tooting horns, rolling drums and otherwise telling the world we had won a new library.

Our parade took us past Sacred Heart School, then located on the site of the present Pastime Club. Sacred Heart students left their classes and lined the street curb to watch our antics. We learned that when Sacred Heart discovered it was hopelessly out of the running, the students elected to turn their school points over to Assumption to contribute to that "unprecedented victory."

Our new library was set up in one of our large classrooms. Soon it was open for daily use, with nuns taking turns as librarian.

The library introduced me to many classics of literature. One book I read, the stage script of "The Front Page," helped me decide my future might lie in journalism. I already knew I would never make it in selling. No way!

Syracuse pipe band wins honors

(Editors note: The Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band was featured recently in Lifestyle in an article by Kevin Hyland.)

The Syracuse Scottish Pipe Band recently returned from the Delco Scottish Games near Philadelphia. There they won first place in grade 4 in a field of 15 pipe bands from the eastern United States and Canada.

In solo entries, the youngest member, John McKie of Liverpool placed fourth in grade 4 in a field of 40 competitors.

Earlier this year, the band attended a

small competition in Kingston, Ontario, where they won first place in band event and the trio event. In individual events, Charles Poltenson of Liverpool placed first in Novice Piping; Mike NacNinch of Liverpool placed third in grade 4 piping, and in Open Piping, Don Dixon of Syracuse won a first and a second, while Mary Ann Katopes took two third places. In the Novice Drumming, Mike Edgerton of Liverpool won first place.

Band member Clare Hanrahan, a graduating senior from Watertown, received a

tuition scholarship from the University of Iowa to play in its pipe band.

Pipe Major J. Avery Head of Phoenix, a chemistry teacher at Liverpool High School, is band director. Drum Sargent, John Allis of Syracuse is a student at Syracuse University.

The band will compete at the Syracuse Scottish Games, Aug. 9, at Griffin Field. Practice takes place on Thursday, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m., at Elmwood Presbyterian Church. Prospective members are invited to attend.

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