



Trader Photo by Rohanna Mertens

Children in the Random Farms neighborhood eagerly took advantage of the opportunity to put on a show.

## Teen is a One-Woman Theater Company

By WAYNE VAN AKEN

CHAPPAQUA — A female Tommy Tune? A future Tony winner? At the age of 16 the possibilities appear endless for Anya Wallach, a virtual one-woman theater company who, after years of performing on stage, has ventured behind the scenes to try her hand at directing and producing.

The Horace Greeley student has acted in regional theater since the age of 12; although she said nothing could have prepared her for the challenge of directing 13 children ages 7 to 12 in a Broadway musical revue, as she did two weeks ago.

The idea for such an undertaking came to Anya earlier this year, guided by her desire to give local kids an opportunity to sing and dance before an audience. Though her goals were clear, executing them proved to be more complicated than she first thought.

"You have an idea and doubt that anything is really going to happen with it," said Anya. "When it started coming together, I couldn't really believe it. But you have to deal with the problems of where to do it, what songs to do, what to wear. It became a big deal."

The big deal became a bit more manageable, Anya said, with the support shown by her family and members of the community, which proved to be the source of the majority of the performers. Looking back at the performance at the Random Farms clubhouse, she said it was the professionalism and enthusiasm shown by the children which helped make her job easier.

"I was really impressed by the



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Anya Wallach

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kids, they were just very into it," said Anya. "I went in unsure, expecting the worst, but everyone who auditioned was interested in theater. The parents knew this, and they were good about bringing them to rehearsals. We rehearsed for only three weeks, but they had everything down."

Among the songs included in the revue were standards such as "Tomorrow" and "There's No

Business Like Show Business." One of the main reasons for choosing mostly mainstream tunes was the lack of any live musical accompaniment. That problem which was solved by the use of a karaoke machine, an option which admittedly frightened her at times.

"I was a bit worried the day of the show," said Anya, "because if the kids messed up, you couldn't just stop the tape and go back to a point. I got

cold feet, but after getting over some nervousness, they were great. I concentrated on the quality of the show, and hoped it would make up for the fact that we were lacking things like lighting or great scenery. I was impressed."

Anya said she has just hired a manager and plans to focus greater attention on her acting and singing career, with the hope of obtaining theater or television work. Though her directori-

al debut was a success, Anya said she is unlikely to again take on such a responsibility in the near future.

"I know the kids are looking forward to doing it again, but it was just very exhausting," said Anya. "Who knows what will happen down the line though. Everybody had fun. The kids enjoyed it and that was the point."