

## In the spotlight

The audition line for the role of Liesl's boyfriend, Rolf, in *The Sound of Music*, snaked out the door when dark-haired, 20-year-old Dan Truhitte arrived. Filming had already begun, but the teen love interest of the oldest Von Trapp daughter had not yet been cast.

"They could not find somebody that could sing, dance, and play a Nazi," says Dan, now 53, and living northeast of Charlotte, in Concord. The Sacramento, California, native nailed the part. Still, the character was a "tough nut to crack," says Dan.

"In the original Broadway show, Rolf does not turn the family in," explains Dan. But in the movie, when Captain von Trapp tells Rolf, "You'll never be one of them," the young Nazi proves his loyalty to the Führer. "You have that incredible, almost insane reaction of [Rolf's] indoctrination, to literally blow the whistle and turn that family in, [knowing] they could have been murdered," Dan notes. "Nobody knows more than I do what a rat I was," he laughs. Rolf's betrayal saved the movie from saccharin overload, Dan contends, and reflected Hitler's intense hold over young people.

"Right after I finished being a nasty Nazi, I joined the U.S. Marine Corps and served my country," Dan says with irony. After the Marines, he appeared in movies, theater, TV, and cabaret acts with performers such as Juliet Prowse, Celeste Holm, and Tab Hunter. When the call cooled for singing



### Dan Truhitte

#### *The Sound of Music Man*

"I had to learn how  
to shag," says Dan  
about moving to  
North Carolina.

PHOTOGRAPH: GARY CLARK

and dancing actors, Dan taught song and dance and worked in real estate.

A few years ago, Dan decided North Carolina's hills were for him. He met his wife, T. J., when he taught voice to her daughter Aleia. When Dan and T. J. married, their ceremony rivaled the Captain and Maria's. Dan's three sons and T. J.'s three daughters all participated. Just before the traditional wedding song, a stanza of "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" resounded throughout the church. Dan even serenaded T. J. with the lyrics: "And here you are, standing there, loving me . . ."

In September 1993, the Old Courthouse Theatre in Concord asked him to portray Captain von Trapp. To his astonishment, the TV show *Entertainment Tonight* came to cover the new role.

Since then, his career has bloomed like edelweiss. Dan still works in real estate and teaches. But this past May, Dan, T. J., and a family friend led a tour of Austrian sites where the movie was filmed. He performs his own original Carolina medley and *The Sound of Music* songs for special group audiences. Most recently, Rosie O'Donnell invited him on her talk show.

Obviously, Dan is living happily ever after. And he has "rewritten" the script for Rolf: "When the Nazis find the nuns have pulled out those car parts, they are going to execute them. Rolf shoots all those lousy Nazis, and becomes a hero."

Nancy Dorman-Hickson