

EVENTS

How Vanessa Hudgens’ dad helped her become a star

BY JUSTIN WILLIAM MOYER  
WASHINGTON POST

Vanessa Hudgens’ childhood was filled with tough times. There was debt. There were second-hand clothes. There were long rides on hot freeways in Southern California with the fuel gauge closing in on “E.” And her father, firefighter Greg Hudgens, was always there for her — commuting back and forth to his job in San Diego even as his family lived near Los Angeles so his daughter could go to auditions. “My parents gave up so much,” Hudgens said in 2013. “... He would keep driving back to the same place that he worked every time we moved. By the end, the commute was not fun.”

But now, Hudgens’ father is gone.

Greg Hudgens died after a months-long battle with cancer — and his daughter announced the terrible news to the world as she prepared to make America laugh Sunday night as Rizzo in “Grease: Live,” one of her highest-profile roles to date.

“I am so sad to say that last night my daddy, Greg passed away from stage 4 cancer,” Hudgens announced. “Thank you to everyone who kept him in your prayers. ... Tonight, I do the show in his honor.”

The tragic moment only

seemed to fuel Hudgens’ performance, which earned raves. Hollywood Life: “Vanessa Hudgens as Rizzo stole the show — she literally embodied her.” The Wrap: “Vanessa Hudgens Crushes ‘Grease.’” The New York Times: “Vanessa Hudgens, whose father had died the night before, deserves some kind of prize for gutting through Rizzo.”

It was a breakthrough moment for a young star who, having already conquered network TV, Broadway and the Billboard chart, didn’t really need one. And her success was partly the result of the man she performed for Sunday evening — one who, after some skepticism, was won over by his daughter’s commitment to her art.

“I was leery from the beginning,” Greg Hudgens told The Washington Post last year. “As she got more immersed, we made a pact. As long as she still applied herself to school and kept her head out of the clouds, we would continue to help her.”

That help began early — after Hudgens’ parents thought she made a great Mary during a preschool Christmas pageant. Dance classes started at age 4, though money wasn’t always abundant, and nothing could interfere with mass on Sundays.



Actors Aaron Tveit (from left) and Julianne Hough and executive producer Marc Platt celebrate after “Grease Live” cast members broke in to spontaneous song during the Fox Network presentation at the Television Critics Association winter press tour in Pasadena, California, last month.

“Money was a big thing,” Hudgens said. “My parents drove me up to L.A., which cost a lot because of gas, and took out loans so that we could move from location to location to be close to L.A. The family definitely struggled.” She added: “They were very supportive of me. They gave up a lot so that I could get to where I am.”

For an up-and-coming actress who refused to lose, however, there was no choice.

“It’s tough,” Hudgens said. “You don’t want to see your

child get hurt or hear someone tell your child she’s not good enough. But I would say, ‘If this role doesn’t happen, the next thing that comes along will be even bigger and better.’ You have to have that mentality.”

That mentality led to a steady rise to fame: TV appearances, the acclaimed drama “Thirteen” in 2003, “High School Musical” in 2007. Her dad was with her every step of the way.

“I love my poppa bear so much,” she wrote on Insta-

gram to mark Father’s Day in June. “I will never be able to repay him with all the time he spent helping me reach my goals. I will be forever grateful. God is so good.”

But in August of last year, Hudgens announced that there was trouble on the horizon.

“Last year, my boyfriend, Austin [Butler], lost his mum, Lori, to cancer, and my dad has just been recently diagnosed with stage four cancer,” she said while accepting an award for breakthrough per-

former at the 2015 Industry Dance Awards. “Let me tell you, I hate cancer. I hate cancer with every cell of my being. ... This award, it means a lot to me but I dedicate it to my boyfriend’s mum, Lori, my dad, and to all the families out there who are struggling with this, because it really takes a strong person and a strong family to be able to help those out who are going through this.”

In September, however, there was hope. Greg had made it through the initial rounds of treatment. “My daddy made it to the moon,” Hudgens wrote on Instagram. “Done with chemo and almost done with radiation. Thanks for the prayers.”

Sadly, for Hudgens’ father, the end was near, and came over the weekend. Though it was little consolation, ironic detachment — the default mode for “hate-watching” high-profile national broadcasts of live musicals such as “The Sound of Music,” “Peter Pan” and “The Wiz” — was, for once, suspended. “As “Grease: Live” approached, an emotion not always familiar on social media flittered across countless screens: kindness.

“So sorry for your loss,” one Hudgens supporter wrote on Twitter. “We’re rooting for you! Go get ‘em!!!” She did.

Things to Do

BANGOR — Bangor Toastmasters, 7 p.m. first and third Wednesdays, Beal College, 99 Farm Road. Next meeting, Feb. 3.

BANGOR—FUSION: Bangor launching fourth season of dodgeball with 32 teams and more than 400 players, 5-9 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Field-s4Kids, 129 Farm Road, behind Beal College.

BELFAST — “Bodies” opening reception, 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Perimeter Gallery, 96 Main St. Exhibition through March 10. 338-0555 or perimeter96@gmail.com.

BLUE HILL — Exhibit of colored pencil drawings, “Crystal Gems” by 7-year-old Bean Fitzpatrick, during library hours through February, children’s Larchwood exhibit case, Blue Hill Public Library, 5 Parker Point Road. 374-5515.

BREWER — Esther Rauch discussing the opera “Turandot,” 5:30-6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, Brewer Public Library. Free. Pair of tickets for Met Live performance raffled at the end of presentation. 989-7943.

BREWER — Storytime for preschool children and caregivers, 10:30-11:15 a.m. Tuesday and Wednesday, Feb. 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17, 23 and 24, Brewer Public Library. Read, sing, do crafts and have a snack with Miss Shelley. 989-7943.

BREWER — Experienced or new knitters, crocheters or needleworkers invited to work on community service project, 9:30-11 a.m. Fridays, beginning Feb. 5, Brewer Public Library. In partnership with the Brewer Police Department. You can also bring your own yarn projects and socialize in conference room. 989-7943.

BUCKSPORT — Community Celebration as part of Making Headway in Your Community, 5-7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, Northeast Historic Film’s Alamo Theatre. Free and open to all. Light dinner. Cash bar available.

CAMDEN — “Groundhog Day,” 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Camden Public Library. Part of Camden’s Winterfest winter celebration. Free.

CAMDEN — Frogtown Mountain Puppeteers performing “Everybody Loves Pirates,” 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3,

Camden Opera House. Part of Winterfest celebration. Advance tickets \$5, \$15 family, free to under age 5, at Camden Public Library.

CAMDEN — Discussion for teens, “In Their Shoes: Teens and Dating Violence,” with New Hope for Women, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, Camden Public Library. Pizza provided; RSVP to lcouture@newhopeforwomen.org.

CAMDEN — Midcoast Stroke Support Group, 10-11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, second-floor History Center meeting room, Camden Public Library. Open to all. 236-3440.

CAMDEN — Aspiring Master Gardeners Barbara McNulty and Judy Brogden discussing their research, preparation and installation of the colonial garden at General Henry Knox Museum in Thomaston, 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Camden Public Library. Part of Camden Garden Club’s Winter Horticulture Series. 236-3440.

ELLSWORTH — Gilbert and Sullivan Society live production of “Patience,” 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5; 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 6-7; 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12; 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 13-14, The Grand. \$21; \$19 seniors and students. The Grand box office, 667-9500 or grandonline.org.

ELLSWORTH — Dietician Amy Henderson, diabetes and nutrition supervisor, Maine Coast Memorial Hospital talking about healthful eating in winter, 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, Beth Wright

Cancer Center, 23 Commerce Park. To register, 664-0339.

NORTHPORT — U.S. Toboggan Nationals kick off and celebration of 2016 Camden Winterfest at the annual Fire and Ice Event, 5-9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, Lookout Point. Bonfires, music, food, fireworks and fun.

ORONO — Orono Historical Society program: Hank Lunn giving firsthand account of what it was like during World War II to have German soldiers working on his family farm in Littleton, 1-2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3, Orono Public Library, 39 Pine St. 866-5060.

PORTLAND — “400 Years of New Mainers,” through April 2, Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St. Opening reception, 5-9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, at the society. Reception is free. Part of the First Friday Art Walk.

PORTLAND — Baxter Academy for Technology and Science showcase exhibit of student project work, “STE(A)M: The Art of Innovation at Baxter Academy,” 5-8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 5, 561 Congress St. Shows off aesthetic side of a STEM-based high school students. Adam.Gilman@baxter-academy.org.

ROCKLAND — Snow Day Camp available to ages 5-10 on days school is canceled because of snow, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., First Universalist Church, 345 Broadway. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks. Organized activities. Deposit of \$15 per child to reserve space and \$15 per child per snow day. If no snow

days, deposit will be returned. Limited to 30. 370-7887 or uursnow-daycamp@luurockland.org.

ROCKLAND — Destination Wellness Series with Paula Jackson-Jones and nurse Jolinda Rocket discussing Lyme disease diagnosis and treatment, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Rockland Public Library. midcoastlymediseasesupedu@gmail.com, jolinda@healthyoutlook.me, midcoastlymediseasesupport.blogspot.com or healthyoutlook.me.

ROCKLAND — Rockland Civics Happy Hour, 5-7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4,

The Speakeasy, 2 Park Drive. Politically-neutral gathering where attendees mingle and converse about Rockland matters without formality or animosity. 678-772-0150 or nate@rocklandsteelhouse.com.

SOUTHWEST HARBOR — Mardi Gras celebration, 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4, Southwest Harbor Public Library. Demonstration of methods used at library’s Summer Story Camp. Camp themes announced, advance registration available. Also, new show by Barn Arts Collective, traditional Mardi Gras

snacks, demonstration by Crystal DaGraca, Story Camp head teacher, samba parade. Make a shaker and join in parade. Costumes encouraged. 244-7065.

SOUTHWEST HARBOR — Book discussion, “Small as an Elephant” by children’s author Jennifer Richard Jacobson, 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2, Southwest Harbor Public Library. Part of library’s One Park-One Read program for Acadia National Park Centennial. Refreshments. 244-7065.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Tuesday prime time

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
BROADCAST	2 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	Hollywood Game Night	Chicago Med (N) (HD)	Chicago Fire (N) (HD)	News				
	4 CBC Rick Mercer 22 Minutes	Creek Mr. D (N)	The National (N)	CBC Coronation Rick Mercer					
	5 CBS Big Bang Broke Girl	(:01) Super Bowl's Greatest	Commercials 2016 (N)	(:01) NCIS (HD)	News				
	52 CW Family Guy	The Flash (N) (HD)	iZombie (N) (HD)	News Seinfeld	Cougar				
	6 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	Hollywood Game Night	Chicago Med (N) (HD)	Chicago Fire (N) (HD)	News				
	7 ABC Wheel Jeopardy!	Fresh-Boat Muppets	Marvel's Agent Carter	What Would You Do? (N)	News				
	WAGM FOX The Insider Ent. Tonight	New Girl	Grand Brooklyn The Grinder	News Big Bang	Big Bang				
	8 ABC Wheel Jeopardy!	Fresh-Boat Muppets	Marvel's Agent Carter	What Would You Do? (N)	News				
	MPBN PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	Finding Your Roots (N) (HD)	American Experience (N) (HD)	News-Lisa CTV News	Daily Show				
	9 PBS CSI: Cyber (HD)	The Flash (N) (HD)	Marvel's Agent Carter	(:01) NCIS (HD)	News				
KIDS	13 CBS Ent. Tonight The Insider	(:01) Super Bowl's Greatest	Commercials 2016 (N)	(:01) NCIS (HD)	News				
	22 FOX Mod Fam Mod Fam	New Girl	Grand Brooklyn The Grinder	TBA FOX 22	Walk:Dead				
	33 IND M*A*S*H M*A*S*H	Andy Griffith	Happy Days Laverne	Hogan Hero	Hogan Hero C. Burnett				
	38 IND Big Bang Big Bang	The Walking Dead	The Walking Dead	WBZ News (N) (HD)	Seinfeld				
LEARN	HIST The Curse of Oak Island	Digging Deeper	The Curse of Oak Island	To Be Announced	Oak Island				
	DISC Moonshiners	Moonshiners: Outlaw Cuts	Moonshiners (N)	Killing Fields (N)	Moonshine				
	TLC The Little Couple	The Little Couple	The Little Couple (N)	Rattled (N)	Couple				
	A&E Fit to Fat to Fitter	Married at First Sight	Married at First Sight (N)	(:01) Fit to Fat to Fitter (N)	Fit to Fat				
SPORTS	ANPL River Monsters	River Monsters Boat attack killed over 200 people.		Wild Expectations	Monsters				
	CSNE Celtics Pre.	NBA Basketball Boston Celtics at New York Knicks. (L)	Celtics SportsNet	Sports					
	ESPN College Basketball Kentucky at Tennessee. (N) (L)	College Basketball Indiana at Michigan. (N) (L)	SportCtr						
	ESPN2 NBA Coast to Coast (N) (L)	College Basketball West Virginia at Iowa State. (N)	Basketball						
NEWS	NBCSP NHL Live (N) NHL Hockey Florida Panthers at Washington Capitals. (N) (L)	(:15) NHL Overtime (N)	World Ser.						
	NESN NHL Hockey Toronto Maple Leafs at Boston Bruins. (N) (L)	Bruins Sports	Sports						
	CNBC The Profit	Shark Tank	Shark Tank	The Profit (N)	The Profit				
	CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N)	Anderson Cooper 360	Anderson Cooper 360	CNN Tonight	Tonight				
VARIETY	FNC Greta Van Susteren	The O'Reilly Factor (N)	The Kelly Factor (N)	Hannity (N)	O'Reilly				
	MSNBC Hardball Chris Matthews	All In With Chris Hayes	Rachel Maddow Show	The Last Word	All In With				
	AMC (5:00) *** The Rock (R)	*** The Fugitive (1993, Suspense) Harrison Ford, Sela Ward. (P6-13)	AF1						
	BRV Real Housewives/Beverly	Real Housewives/Beverly	Real Housewives/Beverly	Girlfriends' Guide:Divorce	Happens				
COM	CMT Last Man Last Man	Last Man Last Man	* Fool's Gold (2008, Action)	Matthew McConaughey. (P6-13)					
	COM Groundhog (:24) *** Groundhog Day (1993) Bill Murray, Chris Elliott. (P6)	Bill Murray, Chris Elliott. (P6)		Tosh.0	Half Hour	Daily Show			
	E! News (N)	Total Divas	Total Divas (N)	Just Jillian (N)	E! News				
	FOOD Chopped	Chopped Junior	Chopped (N)	Chopped (N)	Chopped				
VARIETY	FX (5:00) Thor ** Thor: The Dark World (2013) Chris Hemsworth. (P6-13)			The People v. O.J. Simpson: American					
	GAC Big Sky Big Sky	Big Sky Big Sky	Big Sky Big Sky	Big Sky Big Sky	Big Sky				
	HALL Last Man Last Man	All Things Valentine (2015) Sarah Rafferty. (NR)		The Middle The Middle	Golden Girls				
	HGTV Fixer Upper	Fixer Upper	Fixer Upper (N)	Hunters Hunters Int'l	Fixer Upper				
VARIETY	LIFE Dance Moms	Dance Moms (N)	Dance Moms (N)	(:06) Pitch Slapped (N)	Little				
	MTV Ridiculous. Ridiculous.	Ridiculous. Ridiculous.	Teen Wolf (N)	The Shannara Chronicles	Amer Pie				
	OXY Prancing Elites	Prancing Elites	Prancing Elites	Prancing Elites	Prancing				
	SPIKE (5:00) *** Hitch (2005)	** Happy Gilmore (1996) Adam Sandler. (P6-13)	*** Hitch (2005) Will Smith. (P6-13)						
VARIETY	SYFY (5:30) ** Silent Hill (R)	** Resident Evil (2002, Horror) Milla Jovovich. (R)		The Expanse (N)					
	TBN Supernat. Potters	Trinity J. Meyer Prince	Cornelius	Praise the Lord					
	TBS Seinfeld Seinfeld	Big Bang Big Bang	Big Bang Big Bang	Big Bang Big Bang	Conan (N)				
	TCM (5:00) Battle of the Bulge	*** The Sting (1973) Paul Newman. (P6)		(:15) *** The Verdict (1982) (R)					
VARIETY	TMC (6:15) ** Delivery Man	** Pride (2007, Drama) Terrence Howard. (P6)		** Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom					
	TNT Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle				
	TRAVEL Bizarre Foods America	Bizarre Foods America	Delicious Destinations	Booze Traveler (N)	Bizarre				
	TRU Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Genius 10 Things	10 Things				
VARIETY	TVL Andy Griffith Andy Griffith	Everybody Raymond	Raymond Raymond	Raymond Raymond	King				
	USA Mod Fam Mod Fam	Mod Fam Mod Fam	Mod Fam Mod Fam	Mod Fam Mod Fam	Mod Fam				
	VH1 Love & Hip Hop	*** The Best Man (1999, Comedy-Drama) Taye Diggs. (R)		(:36) Coming to America					
	WGN-A ** Men in Black II (2002) Tommy Lee Jones.	Outsiders (N)	Outsiders (N)	Outsiders	Outsiders				
PREMIUM	ENC (6:10) ** Real Genius (1985) Val Kilmer. (P6)	** Mars Attacks! (1996) Jack Nicholson. Martians fry earthlings, in a parody of 1950s sci-fi films.		(9:50) ** Think Like a Man Too (2014) (ESP) Adam Brody. (P6-13)					
	HBO Real Time With Bill Maher	** True Story (2015, Crime Drama) (ESP) Jonah Hill, James Franco. (R)	(:45) ** Divergent (2014, Science Fiction) (ESP) Shailene Woodley, Theo James, Ashley Judd. (P6-13)						
	MAX (6:35) ** Meet the Spartans (2008) Sean Maguire.	*** 300 (2007) (ESP) Gerard Butler. Badly outnumbered Spartan warriors battle the Persian army. (R)		** 300: Rise of an Empire (2014, Action) (ESP) Sullivan Stapleton. (R)					
	SHOW (6:20) Backcountry (2014) Missy Peregrym. (R)	Billions Axe makes an activist play. (ESP)	Inside the NFL (N)	Shameless Fiona confronts the Patrick. (ESP)	Inside the NFL				
STARZ	(6:40) *** Cinderella (2015, Fantasy) (ESP) Cate Blanchett. (P6)	** Big Game (2014, Action) (ESP) Samuel L. Jackson. (P6-13)		Black Sails The Walrus crew fights the elements.	** Life (1999) (R)				