

# The Betsy-Tacy Society



*"All those resolutions she had made on Babcock's Bay! How they had been smashed to smithereens! She wondered whether life consisted of making resolutions and breaking them, of climbing up and slipping down. 'I believe that's it,' she thought. 'And the bright side of it is that you never slip down to quite the point you started climbing from. You always gain a little.'"* — **BETSY WAS A JUNIOR**



## THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY

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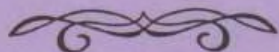
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Newsletter deadlines are Feb. 1, May 1, Aug. 1, and Nov. 1 for the spring, summer, fall, and winter issues respectively. Please send news and articles to Wendylee Raun, 4244 Alabama Ave. So., Minneapolis, MN 55416.

## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

What you are holding in your hand is a truly remarkable publication. It looks rather like a regular issue, feels like one, and even reads like one. But it is more than that. In reality it is the result of a collaboration between nine people, only a few of whom have ever met any of the others—people living as far apart as Birmingham, Alabama; Zion, Illinois; Boston, Massachusetts; Palos Verdes, California; and Mankato, Minnesota, to name a few.

*Newsletter #12* is actually a sort of transition issue in which the Betsy-Tacy Society newsletter changes from being primarily the work of one stunningly dedicated member—Sharla Whalen—to being the work of a team of contributors. Each has taken on a part of the whole, done her job well, and sent it on to a coordinator (me) to put in its final form. Somehow, though the issue is late and admittedly imperfect, we managed to get it done with very few problems!

When Sharla first came up with this plan I didn't see how it could work—how could people living on opposite sides of the country, who don't even know each other, put together a cohesive publication? I had, of course, underestimated the writing, editing, and publishing skills of those who had grown up under the influence of one Betsy Ray.

Which leads me to a question that has occurred to me frequently in the past few weeks of working with this group: So many members of the Betsy-Tacy Society are skilled writers, editors, and teachers of writing. What came first? Were we originally drawn to Betsy because of our own interest in writing, or did our interest in Betsy lead us to an interest in writing? In my own case, I suspect it may have been the latter. What was it for you? We'd love to hear your thoughts on this.

All of us who have worked on this issue hope that you will enjoy reading it, and that you will not hesitate to put your pen to paper (or your fingers on the keyboard) and share your thoughts about it with us.

Patty Warhol, Editor



## FROM YOUR FRIENDLY MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON

Hello, everyone! I'd like to mention a few concerns about bulk mail. We use it because it helps us keep our costs down, but it does mean that the newsletters are delivered at different times in different places—even, sometimes, in different zip codes in the same city. So if a friend or relative gets a newsletter, and a week later you're still waiting, don't panic! Please wait a few weeks before writing to request another one. Also, bulk mail is not forwarded, so if you're about to move, please send me your new address so I can make sure your newsletter finds you. And keep those cards and letters coming—we love to hear from you.

Michele Franck



The Betsy-Tacy Society was formed in Mankato, MN in April, 1990. Members, now numbering nearly 1,000, receive the Betsy-Tacy Society quarterly newsletter, to which they are invited to contribute articles and information of interest to other members. We are pleased to print excerpts of your letters as space allows, and assume that you will permit us to do so, unless you request otherwise when writing. Address correspondence to Michele Franck, 294 Chestnut Ave., Boston, MA 02130-4440.

## Convention Memories: A Special Thank You

by Karen Arnold  
Colorado Springs, CO

Thank you to everyone who made the convention possible! As one who just showed up and enjoyed every minute, I'd like to thank all of you who worked so hard to make it happen! Hope you'll feel up to doing it again some day.

Special thanks to Merian Lovelace Kirchner for unselfishly sharing her mother with all of us fans. Thank you to Cheryl Harness, whose display at the Colorado Springs Library first alerted me to the fact that there were others like me out there. Thanks to Sharla Whalen for doing all the research I'd love to have done if I had the time. Is your book done yet?! Thank you to Michele Franck for reuniting me with a long-lost literary friend, TOM'S MIDNIGHT GARDEN, through the "What Are You Reading..." column. Thanks to another long-lost friend I'd love to be reunited with, Dianne Armendariz, for playing Betsy to my Tacy for years.

I can never thank my sister Linda enough for introducing me to Betsy so many years ago. I feel so fortunate to have spent that special weekend in Deep Valley with Linda! While I tend to think of her as Julia, she's really more practical, like Betsy. She's the one who brought all her B-T books to the convention so we could read favorite passages together and look up trivia answers late into the night! I only brought BETSY AND THE GREAT WORLD ... "Down to Gehenna or

up to the Throne, He travels the fastest who travels alone," you know.

Thanks to my husband, Mark, who was the first to say, "You and Linda HAVE to go to that convention!" He is also tolerant when I retreat to a bubble bath with a B-T book. Thank you to my daughter Carly for (I hope!) understanding some day why I was in Mankato on her first birthday. I also hope she'll forgive me for using the name Betsy for our dog instead of saving it for her! I'm also thankful for the convention because it encouraged my son Matt to finally read the B-T books, which he previously had dismissed as "girl books." I knew he was hooked when he woke me up at midnight to tell me he had finished BETSY-TACY!

One final note — as Linda and I walked down "Front Street" right after she arrived at the convention, she expressed some disappointment at the modern Mankato as compared to the fictional Deep Valley. I had felt the same way when I first looked around as the van from Minneapolis drove into town. But could anything live up to the Deep Valley Maud created in her prose? It occurred to me that Deep Valley exists inside of each of us. It's not a place, it's a state of mind. Thank you all for allowing me to visit Deep Valley any time I want, through my memories of a wonderful weekend!



## How Joe Willard Met King Kong



by Merian Lovelace Kirchner

Back in March, Corresponding Secretary Michele Franck received a letter from Andrea Shaw of New York City and passed it along to me. It read in part:

"While mining the children's section of the Stanford Library for Betsy-Tacy books, my sister found a copy of KING KONG written by Delos W. Lovelace in 1932. It was a novelization of a story by Merian Cooper and Edgar Wallace, and the dedication in the front was 'to Merian.'

"We were wondering which Merian he was referring to, Merian Cooper or his daughter? But more importantly, did Maud and Delos name their daughter after the co-creator of King Kong? And if they were friends with Merian Cooper, did either of them contribute to the legend of the mutant gorilla running amok in N.Y.C.? It is a wondrous and surreal idea that there could be any connection between Betsy and King Kong."

Here's the story:

Yes, Merian Cooper and Delos Lovelace were friends. They roomed together in Minneapolis before World War I, when they were both starting out in the newspaper business. (I think most Betsy-

Tacy people must know by now that in real life, Betsy and Joe did not meet until the spring of 1917.)

And yes, when I was born in 1931, I was named for Coop, who in the meantime had gone into filmmaking. Maud and Delos had been so sure I was going to be a boy named Thomas that they were in urgent need of a name that would do for a girl, and they liked the odd spelling of Merian with an "e."

Another yes — if Delos' KING KONG is dedicated to Merian, I'm sure it's for me. (I didn't know it was. My copy, battered but seemingly intact, doesn't have a dedication page.) If the dedication had been for Coop, it would have read "to Coop," or "to Merian C. Cooper," if Delos wanted to be formal.

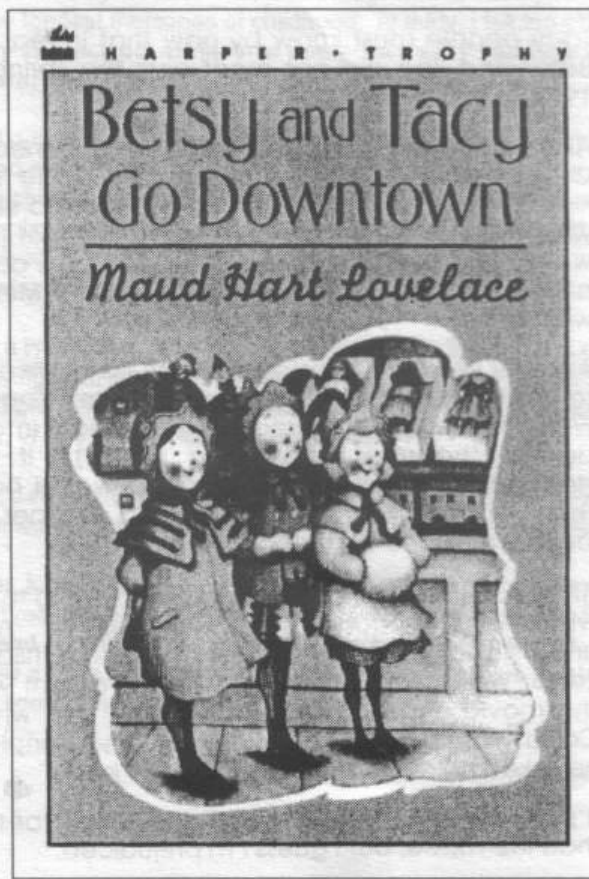
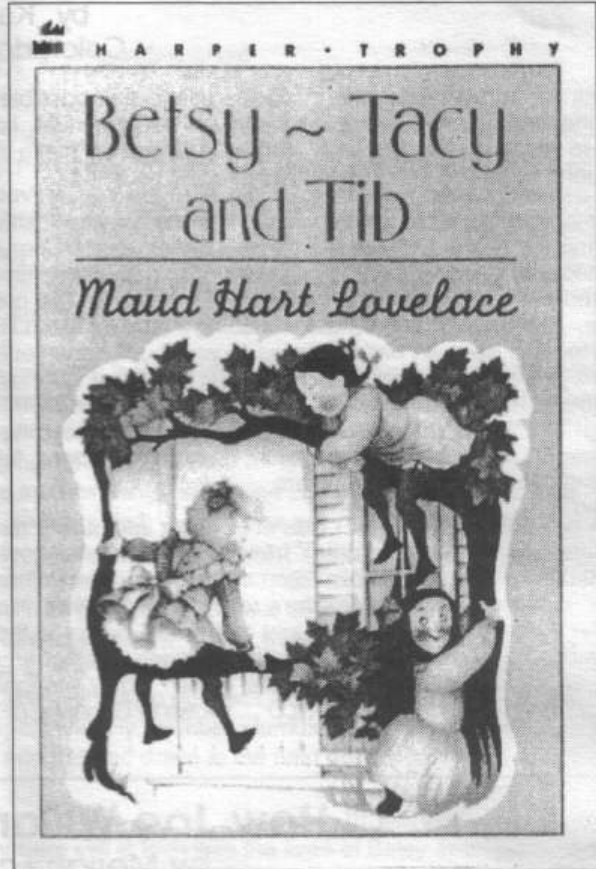
And finally, no — the Lovelaces had nothing to do with the invention of the Beast God. As I understand it, Kong was really the brainchild of Edgar Wallace. But Wallace's involvement with the movie ended at an early stage, and when Coop wanted a novelization of the screenplay, he asked his old roommate to do the job.

It's a wonderful novel. I think it's almost better than the movie, but I guess I'm prejudiced.

### HARPERCOLLINS REPRINTS FIRST FOUR BETSY-TACY BOOKS

We are delighted to present on the cover of this issue and on this page the new cover illustrations for the first four books in the Betsy-Tacy series, which have just been released by HarperCollins Trophy, paperback division. The books will be in paperback, but if the response to them is good, HarperCollins may reprint them in hardcover as well. And if the interest seems to be there, HarperCollins will consider reprinting all the books in the series.

HarperCollins needs to hear from all of us in enthusiastic support of their reprinting all the Lovelace books. George Nicholson is the new Harper Collins Trophy Publisher, and Jennifer Brown the new Editorial Director; please write to each of them to thank them for reprinting the first four books, and to urge them to reprint the rest of them. They can be reached at HarperCollins, 10 East 53rd Street, New York City, NY 10022.



# MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

## NATIONAL BOARD

The 1993 General Meeting of the National Betsy-Tacy Society was held at the Heritage Center in Mankato on Friday, April 30, 1993. The revised Articles and Bylaws were presented.

The theme of the evening was "Victorian Birthday Parties." Kelly Reuter set up a display featuring all the aspects of turn-of-the-century birthdays using antiques and artifacts of the day.

People attending the meeting were asked to bring an old fashioned birthday item to share. It was fun to examine old books from Maud's era, one of which included a page about two cats singing a duet - sound familiar? I wonder if Maud and Bick read that book? Heirloom items of jewelry were brought by members and we all enjoyed looking at their antique beauty.

During the meeting the following board members were elected from votes including those sent in from the newsletter ballot:

Sharla Whalen - 1 yr. term  
Barbara Carter - 2 yr. term  
Dolly Bloomquist - 3 yr. term

Following the meeting, the board met to elect Lona Falen as the new BTS president and Kay Hocker as treasurer. Shirley Lieske offered to work on publicity and Linda Karow will chair the program committee.

## TWIN CITIES CHAPTER

by Kathy Baxter

The next Twin Cities Board Meeting will be held at the Saint

Anthony Park Library, 2445 Como Avenue, in Saint Paul, on Monday, July 12 at 7:00. Everyone is always invited, and anyone who wants to meet for dinner in advance will find at least a small group of us at the Muffuletta across the street at 5:30 or so. Please come!

The Twin Cities Chapter is testing the waters to see if anyone might be interested in a "Betsy and the Great World" tour during the summer of 1994. We have a travel agent member who would lead the tour for us and we think it would be great fun to go with a "crowd" of devoted fans. If you are interested, please drop Kathy Baxter a note at 50 97th Circle NW #201, Minneapolis, MN 55448. She will be in touch.

## GREATER CHICAGO CHAPTER

by Julie Sheffieck  
Chapter Secretary

Happy Birthday, Maud Hart Lovelace!!! On April 25, the Greater Chicago Chapter hosted a party to celebrate the 101st Anniversary of Mrs. Lovelace's birth. Held in the Chicago Historical Society's Executive Dining Room, the event was a great success, and a lot of fun! About 100 people were there, and we had to repeat the program because everyone couldn't be seated at one time.

"Places and Faces of Deep Valley" was the talk given by Sharla Whalen, and we could have listened to her for hours! She revealed some surprising differences between the books and Mrs. Lovelace's real life (did you know that "Betsy" didn't

meet "Joe" until *after* High School?), and answered many questions. We're eagerly awaiting the publication of Sharla's book!

A special guest was New Jersey columnist Libby Moore, who corresponded with Maud Hart Lovelace for over 30 years. Ms. Moore spoke of her ongoing friendship with Mrs. Lovelace, and how much of an inspiration Mrs. Lovelace had been for Ms. Moore's own writing. Weren't we lucky that Ms. Moore happened to be in Chicago that weekend!

We saw a Minnesota Historical Society video-- a short interview with Maud Hart Lovelace from 1953. It was fascinating to see the *real* Betsy!

The "Cat Duet" was performed by Melanie Rigney and Frieda Maheras, and received with hilarious enthusiasm by the audience--especially the children present!

After the scheduled events of the program, we celebrated properly with a huge birthday cake which was decorated with a picture of Betsy's 10th Birthday Party. There was a wonderful raffle, with books donated by members as prizes. The membership of the Greater Chicago Chapter was increased by 15, and many other interested people took information with them. Our thanks to the Chicago Historical Society and the people whose efforts made this special event possible!



## THE BOTANY OF BETSY



by Nancy Cleaveland

The Ray House was painted green, and although obviously new, it had a homelike look. Vines climbed the walls. There were bridal wreath and hydrangea bushes on the lawn, and hanging baskets filled with flowers festooned the small square porch. BETSY WAS A JUNIOR

When Maud painted a verbal picture of the Ray house, it usually included the combination of bridal wreath, hydrangea, and vines. One of the first things Mr. Ray did after moving the family to High Street was to transplant vines from the Hill Street house and set out bridal wreath and hydrangea. "That vine" even followed the Rays to Minneapolis, where the familiar red leaves covering the porch welcomed Betsy when she returned from the Great World. Later, Mr. Ray helped Joe set out bridal wreath and hydrangea around the big front porch of the Willards' Canoe Place house, and he again planted a cutting of "that vine" from Deep Valley.

Is there magic in the combination of bridal wreath and hydrangea? In bloom, the pair is certainly a striking contrast of white against pink or blue. Not only do they offer spectacular flowers in the summer, but surprising color in autumn and subtle texture in winter. Perhaps, though, their appeal to hard-working Mr. Ray lay as much in their cultivation as in their beauty. No shrubs are easier to grow.

**Bridal wreath** (*Spiraea prunifolia*) is a free-flowering deciduous shrub with upright, arching branches. In bloom, every twig is covered with tiny white pom-poms. Single plants can grow to eight feet high and wide, and do best in full sun.

**Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea spp*) is a most familiar old-fashioned shrub. The large, round snowball shaped clusters of flowers rely on soil acidity to determine their color - blue if acid, pink if neutral or alkaline. Hydrangea bushes prefer a rich moist soil in semi- or light shade.



And what of "that vine" so lovingly rooted and transplanted by Mr. Ray? It is mentioned time and time again - but never specifically called by name. Was it a type of ivy or a variety of grapevine? We do know that it was fast growing; it would cover the Ray house with its familiar pattern within a year. We know it had leaves which turned red in the fall. We know it trailed and twined. We just don't know what it was.

Is this to become the "Great Vine Controversy?" If you have any ideas, drop me a line at 3095 Majestic Circle, Avondale Estates, Georgia 30002-1615. Or, do you think we should settle the "Great Cake Controversy" first?

### NOTE FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

I would first like to thank the officers who have just gone off the Board: former president, Doris Berger; former vice-president Kathryn Hanson; and former treasurer, Shirley Lieske. We all appreciate their dedication to keeping the works of MHL alive and the hard work they have done for the Betsy-Tacy Society. Few of us thought we would go from a group of six to a world-wide organization! I also want to thank Michele Franck, our corresponding secretary, and thanks, too, to Sharla Whalen and the new newsletter staff. We're also grateful to the Blue Earth County Historical Society and Linda Henry for their ongoing support.

As the Betsy-Tacy Society comes of age we seek to expand our goals. Any ideas from the membership would be greatly appreciated. One of our goals is to encourage the formation of new chapters around the country. The Twin Cities Chapter held a really fine extravaganza on June 12 featuring some of the Society's prominent members, including Susan Allen Toth and Anna Quindlen. We are excited by our chapter programs. Anyone interested in forming a chapter is invited to come on Board!

We understand that the Betsy-Tacy film project by Deep Valley Productions is going forward. We were pleased that it was through the BTS that they were able to find a writer who is loyal to the Lovelace books--and with professional television writing experience, no less! Stay tuned for more news of the progress of Deep Valley Productions. And watch for your new DVP Creations catalog...coming soon.

I was very excited to receive a card from Merian Lovelace Kirchner this week. She informed me that the new paperback covers Harper Collins has had created for the first four Betsy-Tacy books are prominently featured in their fall catalog. As Merian wrote in her card, "I know it will be a lot of work, but I hope it's a lot of fun, too. I hope it's a very good year for the Society." The best aspect of the fun in the Society is getting to know the many people who share the work, and making new friends along the way. I look forward to making more of the same. And so they did.

Lona Falen

## WHAT ARE YOU READING WHEN YOU'RE NOT READING BETSY-TACY??

"What are you reading?..." is a regular feature of the Betsy-Tacy Society Newsletter. Let us know what you're reading and what you love to reread. Send your literary lists and comments to: Stephanie Smith, 824 Kirkwood, Winthrop Harbor, IL 60096.

by Marja Moyer  
Fremont, CA

I think your *What Are You Reading...* feature is a great "exchange of ideas" section. My 1st grade teacher always said, "If you can read, you can do anything." I've taken her words to heart and been reading steadily ever since!

Besides the usual childhood books: *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London, the *Little House* books and *Anne of Green Gables* series, I soaked up the *Bobbsey Twins* mystery series, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Summer of My German Soldier*, *Gone with the Wind*, *Jane Eyre*, and especially *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen..

I strongly recommend anything by Dorothy L. Sayers, Dashiell Hammett, or the *Miss Marple* series by Agatha Christie. I'm currently reading Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*. I'm very excited by Anne Perry, a mystery writer I've only discovered this year. I quickly laid my hands on her entire Victorian mystery series featuring Inspector Pitt and his wife Charlotte. Ms. Perry has also started a new series featuring an amnesiac policeman turned private investigator, Thomas Monk. I think Ms. Perry really captures the details and essence of Victorian London.

As a child I also enjoyed *Judy's Journey* and *Strawberry Girl* by Lois Lenski; I would greatly appreciate finding out more about this talented author/illustrator.

*Editor's note: to find out more about any author or illustrator, go to your local public library. Resources such as Something About the Author, Children's Literature Review, the Junior Authors series, and Contemporary Authors for adults can give information about the author, including lists of all works published.*

I'm particularly fond of the E. B. White books, *Charlotte's Web* and *Stuart Little*. The Garth Williams illustrations are perfect (as they are for the *Little House* books). And my sister and I both enjoyed all the books by Beverly Cleary--with those delightful illustrations by Louis Darling, they really gave you a feel for the characters and adolescence in general.

Well, I certainly didn't mean to ramble on so--and I feel like I've only scratched the surface!

by Nan Decker  
Albuquerque NM

*What Are You Reading...* is almost my favorite part of this newsletter! I am constantly amazed to find others reading "my" kind of books! I have kept a book list since 1955 when I was a high school junior and now it's fun to have it on a computer. My husband and I prowl through used book stores wherever we travel. We have come across some books I didn't realize were available and I have discovered some good authors this way. However, since I really enjoy authors that wrote a few years back, these books are getting harder and harder to find. I am delighted that our daughter Heidi (now where did that name come from ??) loves the same kind of book I do.

Heidi and I still enjoy children's books. I love the humor in the *Winnie-the-Pooh* books. *Understood Betsy* by Dorothy Canfield and *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett will always be favorites. Louisa May Alcott's style makes me happy when I read her books. *Raggedy Ann* books and illustrations are wonderful. *Mary Poppins* has her special personality and all the adventures are great. Still others are the *Oz* books with the original illustrations, *Bedknob and Broomstick* and of course, L. M. Montgomery--especially the *Emily* books, *The Blue Castle*, and *Jane of Lantern Hill*. As you can see, the illustrations are also very important to me and I love anything by Tasha Tudor.

I "found" Kathleen Norris in a used book store and bought three cheap paperbacks to try. Since then I have devoured anything I can find. Again her style of writing appeals to me, as well as the stories. I tried a book by Gladys Taber from our library and after that searched all the libraries and even checked out books on trips to read all that I could find by her. Since we were living in Hawaii at the time, and I was a little homesick for Minnesota, her books were especially meaningful as she wrote about the seasons and nature. Along that same line, I found books by Louise Dickinson Rich at library book sales and have enjoyed those. *Tisha* by Robert Specht is a romantic adventure set in the cold Yukon Territory--again appealing when you're sweltering in the tropics! *The Egg and I* was also fun to read and I have enjoyed the other books I have found by Betty MacDonald. I love the Miss Read books and also everything I can find by D.E. Stevenson. Bess Streeter Aldrich is a favorite, as is Gladys Hasty Carroll. The books by Thyra Ferre Bjorn are delightful! And I love the

## WHAT ARE YOU READING WHEN YOU'RE NOT READING BETSY-TACY??

continued

English mysteries of Agatha Christie and Patricia Wentworth.

Although I enjoy hearing that others enjoy the same books I have, I also am pleased when someone points out a good author that I haven't read. Janice Holt Giles' books about Kentucky and her life there are wonderful. Dorothy Evelyn Smith is a lot like Miss Read. *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Ardyth Kennelly is good, and I liked *Apple Tree, Lean Down* and others by Mary Pearce.

My taste runs a lot to English books. One day we hope to travel to England. I would love hearing from others who like the same sort of books.



by Wendylee Raun  
St. Louis Park, MN

I so enjoy reading the *What Are You Reading...* column in the Society Newsletter. Although I have seen many of my favorites listed by other members, I don't think I've seen any mention of *Mrs. Mike* by Nancy and Benedict Freedman. This is one of my all time favorites. It is about a young girl from Boston who, in 1907, travels to the Northwest Territories to ease her problem with pleurisy (I had to look that up when I was 12 and I had to look it up again today!). She marries a Royal Canadian Mounty and many adventures follow. Truly a romantic and lovely book. I recently acquired a book by Katherine Mary Flannigan, the "real life" Mrs. Mike, but have not yet had a chance to read it.

While thinking about my favorites, it occurs to me that the books that have moved me most deeply, *Betsy-Tacy and Tib* at the top of that list, have all been about the true nature of love. Love and community and caring, life's drama and joy and growth. Other favorites were and are *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury; *Six of One* by Rita Mae Brown; *Anne of Green Gables*; *Lord of the Rings* by J R R Tolkien; everything by Dorothy Gilman; the *Trixie Belden* series; *Heidi, Heidi Grows Up*, *Heidi's Children*, and last and maybe least, but fun nevertheless, mysteries of all kinds: Robert B. Parker, Elizabeth Peters/Barbara Michaels, Sara Paretsky, Sue Grafton, Linda Barnes. And I know there are many that are just at the edge of my memory, jumping up and down and hollering, "Hey, what about us?" Another time, perhaps!

Thanks for the column, it has given me many new avenues to explore as well as bringing back many pleasant memories of books gone by. Keep up the wonderful work!



by Laurie Slagenwhite  
Ypsilanti MI

Here's my literary list!

*A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *Summer of My German Soldier* by Bette Greene, *Shadow in Hawthorn Bay* by Janet Lunn, *Beauty* by Robin McKinley, *The Princess Bride* by S. Morgenstern, *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Philippa Pearce, *Witch of Blackbird Pond* by Elizabeth Speare, *The Zion Covenant* series by Bodie Thoene, *This Present Darkness*, *Piercing the Darkness*, *Prophet*, and *Tilly* by Frank E. Peretti, and *Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.

Anything by Madeleine L'Engle, Cynthia Voigt, Katherine Paterson, L.M. Montgomery, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Gene Stratton-Porter and anything about the Amish!



## WHAT ARE YOU WRITING WHEN YOU'RE NOT READING BETSY-TACY

Books by Betsy-Tacy Society members. (Most recent titles given.)

Cheryl Harness

-- THE QUEEN WITH BEES IN HER HAIR. \$14.95 Holt 1993. ISBN 0-8050-1715-1 **Review**

"(in these) meticulously wrought scenes of Elizabethan grandeur bordered by ornate floral motifs... a wall separates the neighboring kingdoms of Queen Ruby and Hermit King Harry. One day narcissistic Ruby, in an attempt to impress the peasantry, rides through town crowned with roses. Unfortunately, bees swarm to the flowers, creating a particularly bad hair day for Her Majesty." *Publisher's Weekly*.

Susan M. Knorr and Margaret Knorr.

-- BOOKS ON THE MOVE: A read-about-it, go-there guide to America's best family destinations. Free Spirit Publishing, September 1993. Includes children's books related to the various places.

Anna Quindlen

-- THINKING OUT LOUD: On the personal, the political, the public, and the private. \$22.00 Random House 1993. ISBN 0679497111

--THE TREE THAT CAME TO STAY. \$13.00 Crown Books for Young Readers 1992. ISBN 0517581450

Kathleen S. Van Horn

-- "Sweet Violets". *The Herb Companion*, April/May 1993.

-- "Windowsill Jasmines". *House Plant Magazine*, Spring 1993.



## From Our Mailbox

*We'd love to hear from you! Address correspondence to:*

*Michele Franck, Corresponding Secretary, 294 Chestnut Ave., Boston, MA 02130-4414*

*Should you wish to respond to one of the letter writers below, please address her c/o Michele.*

"I found them about 1951 in the Lowell Elementary School Library in Seattle, Washington. Read all the primers and as I aged, there was always a new book to move to. In high school I re-read the series, and even in college I checked them out again. Then the dark years of sophistication and maturity kept me away from the pages. But even through those times, I would talk about these wonderful books I had read when I was growing up. Eventually I dyed my hair red, I suppose because Tacy always seemed to be the prettiest. Finally, after the birth of my two sons, when life is full of children, and children's things, I found the series again in the children's section of the Valencia Library in Valencia, CA, where we still live. I checked out the whole bunch and came home and started reading. Everything was as I remembered it and even better. Onion and butter sandwiches, shirtwaists, Joe, pompadour hairdos, etc., etc., etc." Leanna Nelson Tarczyński, Valencia, CA

"... was thrilled to see the story on the Betsy-Tacy legacy which still continues to this day. I too am a real fan. Although I am unable to make the convention this July, I am eager to receive information regarding the Society." Diane McCarthy, Phoenix, AZ

"My older sister got me started on the books, along with the Little House books of Laura Ingalls Wilder. I read her copies of the first two Betsy-Tacy books, and found the rest of the series at the public library, and also my school library. I must've kept them checked out all the time, reading them over and over. I identified in lots of ways with both Betsy and Tib, not so much Tacy. However, my best friend was Irish Catholic, while I was raised Baptist, like the Rays. Julia's interest in opera, Betsy's trips to the downtown library, Betsy's trip to Europe - oh, my, I grew up with that series. I was from the Deep South (Memphis), and I loved learning about life in the North, still on the Mississippi River, at the turn of the century." Virginia Wilhelm, New York, NY

"Not only am I a fan of the Betsy-Tacy books, but I work for an archives and understand and support historical preservation in the fullest degree. What you are trying to do at the Betsy-Tacy Society is not just preserve a wonderful part of children's literature, but also a part of our country's history at the turn of the century. Thank you for what you do to preserve a wonderful part of children's literature. Honestly, I am trying to say thank you for preserving a part of my childhood." Mimi Wohlschlegel, Lombard, IL

"I read the article in the July, 1992 issue of Victoria magazine. This devotion on the part of adults to a series of books I only vaguely remembered piqued my interest. I am a children's librarian and felt it my "duty" to see what all the fuss was about! I found that my library did not own the series. I was therefore forced to use the interlibrary loan for all of the books. They came from all over Louisiana! Well, what can I say? I'm a fan. I hated to read BETSY'S WEDDING because that meant I was finished! I'm ready to reread the whole series! Yes, I too am a fan. In fact, I've already ordered the series for the library's collection." Cheryl Braud, Franklin, LA

"I was delighted to discover recently the existence of a Betsy-Tacy Society. I grew up reading the Betsy-Tacy stories and still enjoy rereading and rereading them. Being 24 years old, I don't usually confess that, so it was such a wonderful feeling to discover the Betsy-Tacy Society." Sara E. Johnson, Danville, CA

"I find myself reaching for certain books in the series depending upon what's happening in my life. As my wedding approached last October, I pulled out my copy of BETSY'S WEDDING and made sure to read about her wedding day on the morning of mine. As I reviewed her list for a successful married life, it seemed like advice from a dear, old friend. As I write this, my youngest step-daughter and I are reading BETSY-TACY together. It is her first introduction to the books, and she's a fan already. She says they're fun because "they don't just tell you that the girls went up a hill - they tell you all about the hill." Becky Schol, Longmont, CO

"I know it's been said all the time, but I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY ONE!!!!!!!!!!!!!! I have never identified as strongly with any characters in a book as I did Betsy & Tacy. I am so lucky to have a nine year old daughter to share the books with. I can remember begging my parents to take me to Mankato. I was so excited when I got to go there. My parents recently started to clean out their attic and in my things found BETSY-TACY GO DOWNTOWN and HEAVEN TO BETSY. Of course the first thing I did was sit down and read them, although I probably know them by heart." Ellen Grod, Mosinee, WI

## *From Our Mailbox - continued*

"I just received my first newsletter yesterday afternoon and mailed my membership fee this morning. At fifty-two years of age, I am very excited about joining other young-at-heart Betsy, Tacy, and Tib devotees. I would like to suggest some other good reading for all: the Five Little Peppers series, and all the Grace Livingston Hill books. I envy your first readings of these books because they will bring nothing but hours of pleasure, and friends such as Betsy, Tacy, and Tib who seemingly have influenced us all. Again, thanks to the organizing force and for the super newsletter. Keep up the good work. I look forward to my membership and hearing from all about your Betsy, Tacy, and Tib memories." Margaret Price, Omaha, NB

"...stumbled onto my first BETSY-TACY book. It was one of the later books that first caught my eye, but being at an age that strives to find a sense of order, I made myself start at the beginning. I think I read the first book that morning in the library and took the next two home with me. Since that time, I have read them many times. My daughter did not have to stumble onto BETSY-TACY books. Like one waits for a bottle of wine to achieve that moment of perfect aging, I patiently waited for her to be old enough to understand the later books while still young enough to enjoy the first books. There are few things in life one can be certain of, but I was certain that she would enjoy BETSY-TACY books as much as I do. I was not disappointed. As often as we can, usually four to five nights a week, we climb into her bed, turn on the reading lamp and read ourselves into the world of Deep Valley. This ritual has become a highlight for us and we are both disappointed when time will not allow us to come together and read. We have made a pact that in the event that one of us can't read on any given night, the other one will not read ahead. This is as hard for me as it is for my daughter, because there are things I had forgotten, particularly from the earlier books. When we were reading BETSY AND TACY GO OVER THE BIG HILL, we had several nights where we couldn't read. We both thought we would bust before we would be able to find out whether Julia or Tib would be queen. Tough though it was, we held fast to our pact, and the ultimate knowing together was made sweeter for the waiting. I am sure that in my family never again will any member stumble upon BETSY-TACY books. That quiet day in the library I found a treasure to be enjoyed, savored and handed down to the next generation like a priceless family heirloom." Debbie Summers, Richmond, VA

"Hooray! Finally some good news - other people over the age of twelve are still in love with the lives of Betsy and Tacy. I just saw the article in the July issue of VICTORIA magazine about my two friends and my heart began to race so. You see, these girls are in some of my fondest memories of childhood. At thirty, I felt too old to still enjoy Betsy and Tacy - now I know I'm not! I'm off to my local library to check out my favorite Betsy-Tacy story - and this time I won't lie about it being for my niece!!"  
Julie Koziara, Ann Arbor, MI

"As a child growing up in the 1950's I found the Betsy-Tacy books on the shelf at the children's library and read every one. They have stayed with me always. For a long time I thought I was the only one who had discovered these charming books. Then, in comparing childhood stories, I discovered that a friend from church had also loved Betsy and Tacy. When her first daughter was born I was pleasantly surprised to find the books still in print and bought them for her. I have also shared the books with an eight-year-old friend of mine. What a wonderful shock to read about your society! It inspired me to buy copies of the books for myself. Thank you for bringing Betsy and Tacy back into my life!" Toni LaMonica, Santa Monica, CA

"I, too, am a HUGE fan. I received a postcard from Maud Hart Lovelace in 1961. I consumed her books - I was Betsy. In 1972, while suffering from leukemia, rereading her books gave me great comfort. My daughter is eleven and has read the series and I am forty-two, a preschool director, and animal farm owner and still lovingly page through the adventures of Betsy, Tacy, and Tib."  
Vicki Miller, Windy Ridge Farm, Jeromesville, OH

"With what delight did I read about the Betsy-Tacy Society! I, too, have reread the books repeatedly. As a girl, my two friends and I even identified ourselves as Betsy, Tacy, and Tib!" Mary Popelka, Lyndhurst, OH

"My mother, knowing me and my sisters forever love of the Betsy-Tacy series by Maud Hart Lovelace (even though we're both now in college!) recently showed me the July, 1992 article about the Betsy-Tacy Society in VICTORIA magazine. Just as the article said, we have read and reread all the Betsy-Tacy books (and indeed, every Maud Hart Lovelace book we've been able to beg or borrow). Deep Valley and its inhabitants are almost as familiar to us as our own town. Mankato, Minnesota is a place we dream of visiting some day soon. Lindsey Smith, Kirksville, MO

## Books Written by Maud Hart Lovelace

Many members have requested a complete listing of books written by Maud Hart Lovelace. Most of her books are out-of-print, but don't give up hope! The first four Betsy-Tacy books are still currently available. HEAVEN TO BETSY went out-of-print in paperback only last year. BETSY IN SPIE OF HERSELF is at present still in print. (If anyone understands the logic of this situation, fill us in!) Checking paperback exchange bookstores might be a good way to locate a copy of HEAVEN TO BETSY. HarperCollins is reprinting the first four Betsy-Tacy books this fall (see cover and page 4, this issue), and may reissue the four high school books if the response to the reissued grade school books is good. BETSY AND THE GREAT WORLD and BETSY'S WEDDING could possibly follow the other eight into print. EARLY CANDLELIGHT is available through the Minnesota Historical Society, which has also reissued GENTLEMEN FROM ENGLAND.

BETSY-TACY  
 BETSY-TACY AND TIB  
 BETSY AND TACY GO OVER THE BIG HILL  
 BETSY AND TACY GO DOWNTOWN  
 HEAVEN TO BETSY  
 BETSY IN SPIE OF HERSELF  
 BETSY WAS A JUNIOR  
 BETSY AND JOE  
 BETSY AND THE GREAT WORLD  
 BETSY'S WEDDING  
 CARNEY'S HOUSE PARTY  
 EMILY OF DEEP VALLEY

WINONA'S PONY CART  
 THE GOLDEN WEDGE  
 THE TUNE IS IN THE TREE  
 THE TREES KNEEL AT CHRISTMAS  
 WHAT CABRILLO FOUND  
 THE VALENTINE BOX  
 THE BLACK ANGELS  
 EARLY CANDLELIGHT  
 PETTICOAT COURT  
 ONE STAYED AT WELCOME  
 THE CHARMING SALLY  
 GENTLEMEN FROM ENGLAND

### BETSY-TACY SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please check either: New Member  or Renewal

#### Membership Levels

\_\_\_ Sustaining \$100 and up      \_\_\_ Individual \$10  
 \_\_\_ Patron \$25                      \_\_\_ Europe or Canada \$15 and up  
 \_\_\_ Family \$15

If you prefer that your name not be given out for future Betsy-Tacy product mailings, please check here

Membership renewal will be in September, 1993. Make checks payable to the Betsy-Tacy Society.

Please send membership form and check to:

Michele Franck, 294 Chestnut Ave., Boston, MA 02130-4414.

### Update on the Deep Valley Companies

Alison Gulden and her Deep Valley Productions team are well along with preproduction work on their Betsy-Tacy TV series. They spent several days in Mankato early in the spring, scouting locations for filming, and talks with prospective corporate sponsors continue. Meanwhile, the new Deep Valley Creations catalog will soon be in the mail, featuring Cheryl Harness notecards that show Betsy, Tacy, and Tib picnicking on the Big Hill. And a really super catalog is in the works for Christmas '93...wait till you see this year's ornament!

*Betsy, Tacy and Tib by  
Elisabeth Cohoon, Age 6*



### NOTICES UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### National Board

June 10, July 8, and August 12,  
1993 at the Heritage Center,  
415 E. Cherry, Mankato, MN.

#### Chicago Chapter

A picnic for all members will be held at Lake Villa in July. For more information, call Elaine Pappas at (219) 942-5563. The next business meeting will be held in September.

**The Betsy - Tacy Society**  
c/o The Heritage Center, BECHS  
415 Cherry Street  
Mankato, Minnesota 56001-3741

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