

THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY

Note Book

The Betsy-Tacy Society

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Newsletter Deadlines

Newsletter deadlines are March 15, May 15, August 15, and November 15 for the spring, summer, fall, and winter issues respectively. Please send news and articles to Patty Warhol, 32228 SeaRaven Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274.

About the Cover

The cover of the Betsy-Tacy Society Newsletter may need a little explaining: It's an adaptation of the actual cover of one of Maud Hart Lovelace's personal journals. A copy of the original was provided by Shirley Lieske of Mankato, and the adaptation was done by Trish Hayden of Hayden Design, in Fullerton, California.

The Betsy-Tacy Society was formed in Mankato, Minnesota in April, 1990. Members, now numbering nearly 1,000, receive the Betsy-Tacy Society 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. Illustrations by Lois Lenski and Vera Neville from the original books are used with permission from HarperCollins.

Where to Send It!

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

Anything having to do with the Betsy-Tacy organization, Board Meetings, starting new chapters:

Lona Falencykowski
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"From Our Mailbox," letters to the B-T Society to be printed in the newsletter:

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Membership Notes

In order to get our publishing schedule on track, this newsletter has become a combined Spring/Summer issue. Any memberships affected by the change have had their expiration dates extended, so you'll still get all the newsletters you're entitled to.

We've also changed the mailing label codes we use to let you know when your membership has expired. Your renewal is due when the code on the label matches the date of the issue. If your renewal is due with this issue, your label will say **Spring 95** (not Spring/Summer since that won't fit in the space allowed for this information). Please send your renewal fee within 60 days of receiving the newsletter so you don't miss the next issue. As a courtesy, we are also sending one final newsletter to members whose subscriptions expired with the Winter issue (your label code will still read 12/94 - this is the last time we'll use the old codes). Please renew now!

You are welcome to copy the membership form if you don't want to cut up your newsletter, or send me your name, address, and phone on a separate sheet. Please don't staple your check to the page. Make sure to send address changes promptly as bulk mail is seldom forwarded. If you are sending a gift membership please state this along with the recipient's name and address.

I hope to see many of you at the Get-Together in July. It'll be fun to match faces with all those familiar names.

Michele Franck

From the Editor

This issue of the BTS Newsletter features a very special invitation--to the Great Mankato Get-Together of 1995, at which we hope to see you--and an important article: Betsy-Tacy in Cyberspace. For some time now, some of us have been enjoying the opportunity to meet others of us out there on the Internet. It has been so much fun, and so interesting to all of us, that we have wished we could share it with the rest of the membership. The articles by Mary Glascock and Michele Franck will tell you how to get on the maud-L listserv and join us in cyberspace. We look forward to meeting you there!

Patty Warhol



Drawing courtesy of
 Mankato State University

"Tacy's House"

Don't miss the article on page 3!

Stop the Presses! Late-breaking News!

Society to Purchase "Tacy's House" Fundraising to Begin Immediately

On May 1, 1995 Lona Falencykowski, President of the Betsy-Tacy Society, announced that a bid submitted by the Society for the purchase of the property at 332 Center Street, Mankato, Minnesota was accepted.

To all Betsy-Tacy fans, 332 Center Street is better known as "Tacy's house." Tacy (Frances Kenney) moved there with her family in October of 1898. The land adjacent to the house used by the Kenney family for their vegetable gardens and for the pump house was sold many years ago; two homes occupy that property now. "Betsy's house," across the street, is not for sale, nor does the owner expect to offer it in the foreseeable future.

HUD (Housing and Urban Development) presently owns the property at 332 Center. It was offered for sale earlier this year, but the Society was outbid. However, when the successful bidders were unable to obtain financing, the home was offered again. At that time the Society's bid for the property was accepted. We have 60 days from the date of acceptance (May 1, 1995) to obtain financing.

From the earliest days of the Society a fund has existed to save toward an opportunity such as this. However, that fund is still relatively small. **We will need to raise funds to complete this purchase, and to renovate and maintain the property. Any excess donations will be used towards the purchase and operation of other Betsy-Tacy houses.**

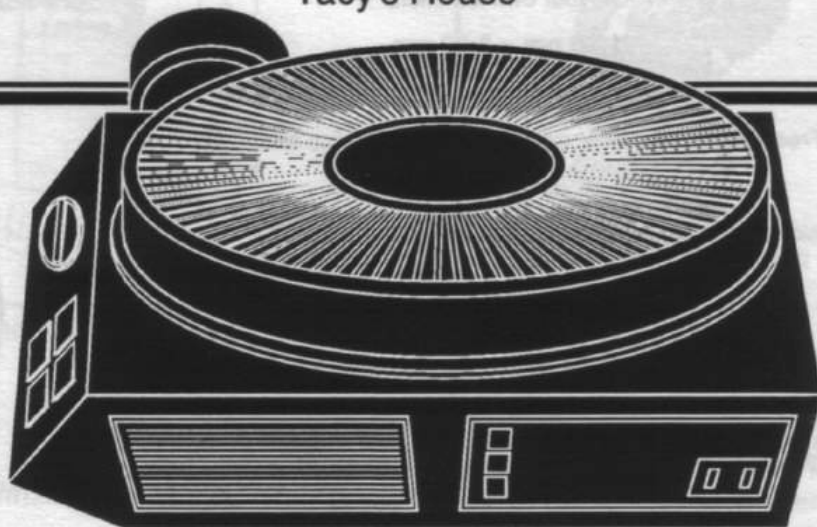
If you'd like to help, please send your contribution to:

House Fund
The Betsy-Tacy Society
c/o The Heritage Center
BECHS
415 Cherry Street
Mankato, MN 56001-3741

Please make checks payable to **The Betsy-Tacy Society**. All contributions to the House Fund are tax-deductible.



Tacy's House



The Great Mankato Get-Together

July 7-9, 1995

The Betsy-Tacy Society cordially invites you and your family to come to Deep Valley for a weekend of friendship and fun. The weekend will include events for adults and for children, with ample time available to explore the community Betsy/Maud loved. The schedule below reflects most of the planned events, but some of the times are approximate. A written confirmation of your registration and a finalized schedule will be mailed to you several weeks prior to the Get-Together.

Tentative Agenda

Friday July 7

Late Afternoon

Check-in and registration at the Mankato Holiday Inn.

7:00 pm

Note: time has changed from registration packet information
Optional dinner of Lebanese specialties at
Meray's Restaurant in Mankato
Official Welcome by BTS President Lona Falencykowski.

Saturday July 8

Check-in and registration continues.

8:00 am

Breakfast buffet at the Holiday Inn.

9:30 am

Keynote Speech
Dr. Louisa Smith, Mankato State University:
"A Day in Mankato circa 1900 as Presented in
Maud Hart Lovelace's Books."

Following the Keynote Speech, informal discussion groups focusing on topics related to the Betsy-Tacy books and their author will take place at the Holiday Inn.

Late Morning until Mid-afternoon.

Bus tours of Mankato and important Betsy-Tacy sites will be running.

10:15 am - 12:00 pm

Children's Program

Special activities planned, followed by a picnic lunch.

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

On your own for lunch.

1:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Informal discussion groups continue.

3:00-7:00 pm

Free time to talk, shop, explore more of Mankato and relax!

7:00 pm

Banquet at the Holiday Inn.

Music provided by the Mankato Suzuki School of Music. Program presented by the Silver Moon Vintage Dance Ensemble.

Sunday July 9

8:00 am

Continental breakfast at the Holiday Inn.

10:00 am

Bus/Carpools depart for Dan and Violet Hoehn's country home by "Murmuring Lake" where Mr. and Mrs. Hart got engaged.

12:00 pm

Farewell Luncheon at Point Pleasant Inn on Madison Lake.

Convention Fee Selection

Space is limited. Your registration form and payment need to be received by June 1. Registrations received after that date will be filled on a "space available basis." Full registration information is contained in the registration package offered in the Winter, 1995 newsletter. Contact Michele Franck, P.O. Box 2903, Framingham, MA 01701 if you need a packet.

Full Convention Package: Includes all events Saturday and Sunday: program admission, bus tours, souvenirs, and four meals (Saturday breakfast, Saturday banquet, Sunday continental breakfast, Sunday noon dinner).

BTS members \$100
Non-members \$110

Saturday-only registration: Includes program admission, bus tours, souvenirs, breakfast.

BTS members \$50
Non-members \$60

Saturday-only plus Evening Banquet

BTS members \$75
Non-members \$85

Child's Full Package: Includes child's program, bus tours, souvenirs, and five meals (Saturday breakfast, Saturday lunch, Saturday Banquet, Sunday continental breakfast, Sunday noon dinner). \$85

Child Saturday-only

\$25

Child Saturday-only plus Evening Banquet

\$40

Child Saturday Evening Banquet only

\$15



Betsy-Tacy in Cyberspace

by Mary Glascock

I found the Betsy-Tacy Society through the Internet. Although I had been a fan of Maud Hart Lovelace for many years, I had no idea that the Betsy-Tacy Society existed. About two years ago, browsing through the online bulletin boards on Prodigy, I found a discussion group under the topic "Maud Hart Lovelace," and those friendly people introduced me to the Society.

letter on your computer and send it to anyone who has an Internet address and they can write back to you. More recently, all three services have given their members access to bulletin boards called Newsgroups or Usergroups. These are loose associations of people with interests in a particular topic. There are more than 5,000 different News-

groups. One Newsgroup good for Betsy-Tacy fans is rec.arts.books.childrens. If you'd like to correspond with other fans, all you have to do is post a note in this newsgroup. Other fans would respond, and you can discuss anything that interests you.

CompuServe, Prodigy, and America Online do not yet provide full access to all the wonders of the Internet, but they are easy to use. All three have helpful graphics with menus (listings of available options) and provide plenty of assistance. To get full Internet access, you would need a local access provider. These are not as user-friendly as the big three, so I wouldn't recommend them to a beginner. But if you want to give them a try, two in New York City are Panix and Pipeline.

How much will it cost you to ride the information superhighway? Assuming that you already own a computer, modem, and communications software, all you will have to pay for is the cost of a phone call and the service charges from the online service you choose. Here's a sampling of these costs:

CompuServe: \$9.95 per month for basic services; \$4.80 per hour for extended services.

Prodigy: \$9.95 per month; \$2.95 per hour for usage above 5 hours.

America Online: \$9.95 per month; charge for time online above your allotment (usually 5 hours).

Panix: \$10 per month for email and newsgroups; full Internet service is \$9.00 per month additional plus a \$40 one-time startup fee. Online time is unlimited.

Competition among these services is keen, and rates and features change frequently in an attempt to attract new members.

If you take the plunge, email me at glascock@panix.com and let me know how you're doing. See you in cyberspace!

Reprinted with permission from the February 1995 New York Chapter newsletter.

It's not as simple as the old "cup and string" method of communication, but even if you're not a computer whiz, visiting with the Betsy-Tacy Crowd on the Internet isn't nearly as complicated as you've perhaps imagined! Read what Mary Glascock has to say before you make up your mind. And for those of you who already use the Internet and just didn't know that our "Crowd" has found a place there, Mary's news (and Michele Franck's article on page 5) will really make your day!

What is the Internet, anyway? The Internet is an unruly, unregulated network of computers. It was created by the United States government to insure that information vital to national security would continue to flow in the event of a catastrophe. As a result, the system was deliberately designed to be chaotic. If computer A is damaged, the Internet will find a way to route information through computer B so that it will eventually reach its final destination. Until quite recently, most of the computers that made up the Internet were based in U.S. government agencies and in universities, and it was used chiefly for governmental or scientific purposes.

In the past few years, the development of commercial, for-profit online services has changed the character of the Internet, and the number of hobbyist users has increased dramatically. It's possible to log on through a home computer and browse through a series of messages about mystery stories, cooking, nuclear physics, or erotica. If you are sufficiently adventurous, you can explore files on computers all over the world. Want to know which editions of *Betsy and Joe* are owned by the Library of Congress? You can telnet to their catalog and find out.

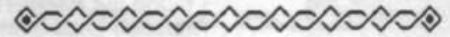
There are a number of ways to ride the Internet, and the system you choose will depend on your computer literacy and your adventurousness. You will need a computer, modem, and perhaps a communications software package. If you use any of the three largest commercial services - CompuServe, Prodigy, or America Online -

they will provide you with software which allows you to dial into and navigate through their system. It used to be that when you logged onto one of the services, you were limited to discussions with other users of the same service. So, if you were a Prodigy user and there was a great discussion about *Betsy's Wedding* taking place on America Online, you were out of luck.

Since the middle of 1994, all of these services have provided email to any Internet address (your service gives you a user ID). With email, you can write a



Betsy and Tacy Ride on the Information Highway



In this companion piece to Mary Glascock's article on page 4, Betsy-Tacy Society Corresponding Secretary Michele Franck explains how to participate in the maud-L online discussion group. To give you a taste of the conversations going on within that group, she's selected some recent notes to the maud-L listserv.

If you're reading this newsletter you know that you aren't "the only one" who loves the Betsy-Tacy series. But did you know that you now can talk about that love with others who share it? If you have access to Internet email, you can join an online discussion group, known as a listserv, which was formed by a group of Maud Hart Lovelace fans. Recent maud-L posts have included spirited exchanges on why members enjoy the B-T books, whether Betsy's and Joe's characters changed after their marriage, which one was the better writer, and even some opinions on whether Tib was likable! Other children's books are often discussed, and recommendations for "must-read" titles are freely offered.

New subscribers to the listserv are welcomed. The only "rule" is that replies to listserv notes should be consolidated into one note, i.e. if you want to respond to what several people have said, reply to each person individually in the same post rather than to each note separately. Or you can send a response to a personal email address. This is so as to keep the number of posts at a manageable level. It's not uncommon to have fifteen to twenty listserv notes per day.

To subscribe (i.e. signup on the mailing list to receive listserv posts) you need to send an email to "listserv@mitvma.mit.edu." Leave the subject heading blank, and type this in the message space:

Subscribe maud-L
First Name middle Name Last Name

The message will look like this:
Subscribe maud-L
Betsy Warrington Ray

Do not sign your note.

Once you send the email off, you'll receive a welcoming message from the listserv with further instructions.

To post a note to the listserv, address it to "maud-l@mitvma.mit.edu" and it will be sent to all listserv subscribers.

Special thanks to BTS member Ann Braden Reilly for setting this up!

Catch up on some past postings!

Following are some excerpts from postings that have appeared on the maud-L listserv in the last two months. We've left the writers' names off in the interest of simplicity. Thanks to the listserv members for their willingness to let us share them.

The Betsy and Joe Relationship Thread

It always bothered me that Joe was clearly the better writer in the books. He won the essay contest every year, and then even when Betsy won Senior Year it was only because Joe "let her win." Or so it seems. That was a fairly condescending situation...Why is it assumed that factual writing is necessarily better than imaginative "flowery" writing? And why does it just so happen that it's the boy who is better at the first, and the girl at the second? I think this is another one of those sexist assumptions that get passed on without people even realizing it. Re: *Betsy's Wedding*. I agree that Betsy and Joe change a lot in this book. I think it's weird, too. When I was a child it really bugged me and I didn't even like that book because of it. I like *Betsy's Wedding* better now than I did then, but there's still something lacking in it--it has sort of a lonely, melancholy air throughout--almost depressed.

I had to get my two cents in on Joe being portrayed as slightly sexist. I never really got that feeling, actually. And I don't really think there was a radical change in the characters of Betsy and Joe, either in *Betsy and the Great World* or *Betsy's Wedding*. They were just simply growing up and entering the adult world of work, travel (which is so broadening), relationships and family. Betsy still has her stubborn determination to succeed at whatever she puts her mind to, whether it be getting her stories published or learning to bake a lemon pie. And Joe clearly adores Betsy and completely supports her; hiring a cleaning woman so Betsy had the time to think and write, doing the cooking when Betsy was still learning, critiquing her writing, and

making plans for the both of them to travel and write together.

I always admired the way Betsy tried to combine a career, which expressed her individuality, with having a really good and loving marriage. There must have been times when one diminished the other, but hopefully the balance shifted back again. If at times Betsy (or Maud) chose the relationship over the career, well, I guess I might do the same thing. There might be consequences for that, but nothing comes easy in life!

I'm enjoying this discussion--isn't it fun to find out how other people interpret the Betsy stories, and how we all have our favorites, and our own take on the situations? It really helps me to broaden my thinking, as I usually respond to someone else's posting by thinking, "Oh, right. I never thought of that!"

I don't think Joe is a sexist. Joe won the Essay Contests, but Betsy never really competed until she and Joe were working side by side in the library. Her losses were always her own, not proof that Joe was a better writer. She's all too willing to put her writing on the back burner when something else comes along. While she experiences waves of discipline, it isn't until she spends her year in California (which we hear about in *Emily of Deep Valley*) away from the Crowd, that she really buckles down and starts selling her stories.

Anyway, I maintain that Joe was more supportive of Betsy's writing, especially at first, than she was. He helps keep her focused when she's more interested in homemaking, for example. He not only insists on a cleaning woman, but also offers to teach Betsy all he learned at Harvard.

I don't think Betsy lost too much of her feminism, especially considering the time. Yes, she was very concerned about homemaking--but you can't say that Joe really just stuck her with the housekeeping and nothing else, either.

He hired the cleaning woman so that she'd have time to write, and he cooked (he "liked" to cook!), and he and Betsy did some writing together...they read each other's work and helped each other, and he was very encouraging. He also respected Betsy's opinion as a critic.

I think that a lot of people are guilty of trying to "PC" the Betsy/Joe relationship. You just can't look at their relationship based on what you would like to find in a '90s relationship. Times were different back then, and no matter how different the Ray family actually was from many other early 20th century families, it still was the early 1900s, and there were pretty strong gender roles.

I thought Joe was the one who changed drastically in *Betsy's Wedding*. Perhaps it is just because we're seeing so much more of him and we're seeing him in a new light. Taking into consideration the time period, I think he was a very loving and supportive husband. I always like how he called Betsy his "pink silk wife"--it sounds like something the very feminine Betsy would like. His touchiness and moodiness bothered me, but I think everyone has the right idea when they say "To each his own." Joe obviously made Betsy happy, so it works in the story.

The Tib Controversy Thread

Okay, here's another topic for discussion. I NEVER LIKED TIB! She's okay when they're really little, but she always seems daft throughout in that she never gets any jokes. I was glad that she moved away but when she came back she was even worse. I just wanted to slap her. She was actually better in *Betsy's Wedding*, except when with Rocky, when I wanted to slug both of them. I think Betsy and Tacy would have been better off without her. (Waits for furious responses...)

My two cents about Tib: She's great, she's smart, she's independent, but she never was Tacy to Betsy. I don't think not getting the jokes meant she was less intelligent than B & T, just that she looked

at life in a different way. Kind of like how Tacy never got into boys the way so many of the rest of the girls in the Crowd did.

Tib is an appreciative friend, clueless about B-T's jokes, but glad they're enjoying themselves and not sulking about being left out (which my friends would be if I always made remarks they didn't get). However, I agree that Tib could be annoying. I liked her best in *Betsy and Joe* when she got Ralph Maddox to play hard in the big game!

I sort of agree with you about Tib. In *Betsy-Tacy and Tib* they get into all sorts of trouble--cutting their hair, dressing up like beggars. I know I was too much of a "goody two-shoes" but I never liked *Betsy-Tacy and Tib* as much as the other childhood books. Also, *Betsy Was a Junior* upset me. I was a little enthralled with the whole sorority thing, but it also bothered me that they got into so much trouble, didn't get picked for committees, the Essay Contest, etc. Is it just an accident that these are the two books Tib appears and reappears in? She's nothing but a trouble-maker--that little blond wisp of a girl! But I agree with others that she probably adds some reality and spice in the books.

The Why-I-Love-These-Books-So-Much Thread

I think I like the "ideal reality" the best--I had a nice family, too, but there was something about Betsy's whole life that made it seem--well, "happier" isn't exactly right, but maybe more fun. The books were so full of detail, I felt that I lived through them, and had some of the kind of fun I never had as a child and teenager--a best friend or two, the kind of high school highjinks that seemed to belong more to her era than mine, when it seemed most of my classmates spent the weekends drinking and getting into real trouble. Perhaps it was partly the longing for a "more innocent" era, which the books portray very well.

What a great question--I always say that I LOVE this book or that book, but seldom do I stop to really think about the various aspects of a book, author, or series that make me love it so much.

One of the best things about the Betsy-Tacy books is that Betsy seems like a realistic nine year old, fourteen year old, seventeen year old, etc. My mother gave me the books over the course of a few years, and I felt like Betsy and I grew up together.

Also, MHL manages to SHOW the reader what is happening in Betsy's life, instead of TELLING it. For example, MHL is never preachy about Betsy's neglecting her studies for her social life, but demonstrates this and its consequences in a very believable way. Too many books that I read in high school really hit the reader over the head with little lessons like "be sensitive to others," "be yourself," "stand up for what is right" etc. These are all really important things, but as a child I learned them from the B-T books without even realizing it. They went hand in hand with the story, instead of using the story as a mere vehicle for those life lessons.

The B-T books do seem less removed from today than some other very good series books. It would have been unlikely if my family had decided to leave the suburbs and move into a sod house like Laura Ingalls did, but I could make fudge, plan picnics with my friends, and stage spur-of-the-moment dramatic events for my family. Betsy seems like a very average girl; easy for me to relate to (now and when I first read the books as a child). I don't think I realized she was "old fashioned" when I read the first three B-Ts in elementary school.

I've always liked the fact the books were accurate time wise...in other words, Betsy was 10 in 1910 (or whatever year it was) and 12 in 1912 and so on. I also liked the fact that Maud wrote as if she really was living in 1910...in *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown* an auto and a telephone make their first appearance. Maud didn't think it necessary to tell the readers that both were relatively new inventions, yet I know I was able to figure that out.

Postings, continued on page 18

What Is That?

by Liz Boardman

How many times have you been happily reading a Betsy-Tacy book only to come across one of Maud's marvelous details and think, "What is that?"

On my latest re-read I started keeping a list. Now, when I'm online or at the library I try to find information on these details.

"Enlarged photographs hung on the walls along with a hair wreath and a picture showing a weeping widow at a tombstone."

— Emily of Deep Valley

Like most of the "old-fashioned things" in Emily's house, hair wreaths date from the Victorian era. Though hair wreaths and hair jewelry date originally from the sixteenth century, they found renewed popularity in England in the 1800s.

Wreaths and jewelry were composed of hair from a beloved person. Though they often memorialized a dear departed, they also were made as keepsakes from the hair of an entire family. The hair was collected then woven into intricate designs. Available patterns included wreaths, brooches, and bookmarks. Until you get up close to one, they aren't obviously hair. They look like crocheted yarn or thread.

Where can you see hair art in person? Independence, Missouri is home to Leila's Hair Museum. Leila Cohoon, the curator, has over 125 wreaths and 600 pieces of hair jewelry. It's located at 815 West 23rd Street and can be reached by phone at (816) 252-HAIR.

The Fall River Historical Society Museum, better known as the home of the famous Lizzie Borden murder artifacts, has several pieces on display at 451 Rock Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, (508) 679-1071. Your local historical society museum may have some samples of this unique Victorian art as well.

Editor's Note: Do you have something you've asked "What is that?" about? Contact Liz Boardman at 22 Woodmark Way, Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879, or via email at lboardman@aol.com.



Brooch Made of Human Hair

Photo courtesy of Leila's Hair Museum, Independence, MO

Of Meat Pies & Other Things

by Beth Hudson



"Winona enjoyed herself that afternoon. They went to Betsy's house first and urged Winona to telephone her mother over the Ray's new telephone...Afterwards they played a game of ping pong. (Winona's side won, of course.) They took her out to the kitchen and introduced her to Rena, red-cheeked and pretty with ribbons woven into the braid that was knotted behind her pompadour. Rena gave them some rocks she had baked that morning. These were little cakes full of raisins and nuts and were very good."

— Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown

Those rocks must have been just awfully good to have convinced Winona to invite Betsy, Tacy, and Tib to see "Uncle Tom's Cabin" at the Opera House on her "comp" tickets. Further verification of their tastiness appears in my 1913 edition of *The Pure Food Cookbook*. Alongside the recipe for "Black Rocks" is a penciled notation, quite old, that reads, "Very Good!" Try these for yourself and see how Winona was tempted.

Black Rocks

One and a half cupfuls of brown sugar, a scant cupful of shortening, three eggs, half a teaspoonful of ground cinnamon, three-fourths a cupful of raisins cut in small pieces, half a cupful of chopped walnut meats, one teaspoonful of vanilla, five tablespoonsful of hot water, one teaspoonful of soda, and one teaspoonful of baking powder stirred into three cupfuls of flour. Beat well and drop from a spoon onto a buttered pan. Bake in a moderate (350 °) oven.

— *The Pure Food Cookbook*
edited by Mildred Maddocks, 1913

A Review: THE BETSY-TACY COMPANION

**The Betsy-Tacy Companion:
A Biography of Maud Hart Lovelace
by Sharla Scannell Whalen
Portalington Press, Whitehall, PA 18052**

Reviewed by Ann Braden Reilly

"The Betsy-Tacy books, written by Maud Hart Lovelace, are long-standing favorites, but in recent years, the formation of a Betsy-Tacy Society has brought renewed interest to the series. Now comes a long-awaited book by one of the Society's members, and Betsy-Tacy lovers won't be disappointed. As most fans of the series know, the books are autobiographical, and Whalen has done a herculean job of comparing the characters and events in the book with their real-life counterparts."

-- BOOKLIST

I was lucky enough to talk to Sharla a number of years ago when doing some research of my own on Maud. I had been having a lot of fun scrounging through old archives, looking for information on anything related to the Betsy-Tacy books. I was both delighted and dismayed to find that Sharla had already done years of research. Delighted because she had collected so much information which would someday be published, and dismayed because she had had the fun of finding the information first.

I soon slacked off on my effort to collect and write up information about Maud, but fortunately for all of us, Sharla persisted! She has collected a wealth of information about Maud's life. Sharla has captured information that might otherwise have been lost, as people age and die, papers get lost or destroyed, etc. Her persistence and attention to detail is phenomenal, so much so that I feared that her biography would only be of interest to someone like me who likes to look through old newspapers on microfilm. Sharla herself seemed to have been concerned about this, because in her delightful preface to the book she says, "Some may find that the Betsy-Tacy books have been subjected to far too much thoroughness here, and that, as Jane Austen put it, 'Every view was pointed out with a minuteness which left beauty entirely behind.' Of course, it is my hope that this will not be the case of *The Betsy-Tacy Companion*."

Sharla's hope was realized in her compelling and well-organized work. She manages to pull together millions of

pieces of information in an interesting and sensible format that flows smoothly, and draws the reader in. *The Betsy-Tacy Companion* goes through Maud's life chapter by chapter, with each chapter devoted to a Betsy-Tacy book (plus a few extra chapters for those parts of Maud's life not covered by the books). Sharla describes how events in each book compare with Maud's real life. For a Betsy-Tacy fan this format works beautifully. What more could we want than to have all of our questions about the books answered? Was the Secret Lane real? Who was Tony? Was he based on a real person? Did the Hart family really enjoy those fine traditions? Did Maud's Crowd have as much fun as Betsy's? Did they really form a sorority in high school? Sharla answers all of those questions, and many more.

The Betsy-Tacy Companion is appropriately named, for although Sharla says, "The real Betsy-Tacy companion is you..." this biography certainly adds to the general companionship of Betsy, her friends, the books, and you, the reader. For one thing, Sharla has considerably made sure that the design of the book compliments the Betsy-Tacy series in appearance (it particularly resembles the original covers of the High School books). But, most importantly, the biography tells us more about Maud, and also about her friends and family, Mankato, Minneapolis, etc. Through reading the Betsy-Tacy series we have all become friends of Betsy and of Betsy's world. We are sad when the series ends with *Betsy's Wedding*. *The Betsy-Tacy Companion*

lets us continue learning new things about the characters, and brings us closer yet to Maud's/Betsy's world.

And one of the best ways the book brings us closer to the books is through pictures. Sharla has included numerous photographs of people and places. She even has a picture of Anna Held of the famous "Anna Held curve." (I don't know about you, but I always wondered what Anna Held looked like.) We get to see the Melborne Hotel. We get to see the Opera House. We get to see Maud, Maud's friends, Bonnie, Herbert, Larry, etc. We get to see just about everything. And the most exciting thing is that just about everything in the books actually existed in reality. For those of us who loved the world of Deep Valley, that's a pretty nice thing to be reassured of.

The Betsy-Tacy Companion is truly a labor of love. At her book-signing in Boston, Sharla described how she got started on the biography. "I'm a diehard fan (you know, the reading and re-reading the books, the compulsive fudge eating, the whole thing)." It takes a great fan like that to do justice to Maud's life, and take the time and patience to research such a great volume of information, and then write it up with such interest and spirit. Thank you, Sharla, for all of your hard work. We fudge-eating fans appreciate it!

Ann Braden Reilly started reading the Betsy-Tacy books when she was 9, and living in Minneapolis. Now she is 38, living in the Boston area, working as a Programmer Analyst--and still reading the Betsy-Tacy books.

Merian's Column

Like Betsy, Maud began writing poetry when she was a little girl. Her proud father had a book of her poems privately printed for her tenth birthday. Here's how two of them, dedicated to her sisters, began:

Kathleen is a romantic name
It suggests artistic or musical fame...

and

Our sweet little Helen, our baby, our joy,
So loving and raquish, so winsome and coy."

Not bad for somebody who didn't even have two numbers in her age yet. When you visit Mankato you'll find the book on display in the Maud Hart Lovelace Wing of the Minnesota Valley Regional Library.

Maud went on writing poems in odd moments all her life (and I'm sure Betsy did, too). She probably sold some of them, but I think she wrote poetry just because she loved to--and sometimes needed to.

Here are five poems that Andrea and I have turned up in the course of our treasure hunt:

"Bobiana" is a charming piece of light verse, written when the twenties were beginning to roar and women were cropping their hair up to their earlobes. "The Bird House" has good lines and some not so good, but I like it because it's so gentle and thoughtful. These two were written at 1109 West 25th Street in Minneapolis, where Maud and Delos lived in the early '20s--the little house that she located on the imaginary Canoe Place and gave to Betsy and Joe in Betsy's Wedding.

"To the Seven" and "We Who Have Seen Midwestern Oaks Turn Red" were written during World War II. Maud gives us the news item that inspired "We Who Have Seen...;" we don't know who "The Seven" were, but they must have been hostages or prisoners of war. The Lovelaces were living in Garden City in those years. Maud was at work on the Betsy-Tacy books, and Delos was Assistant City Editor of the *New York Sun*. I rather think both poems were published on the *Sun's* editorial page. I was 12 or 13, and they made me cry. They still do, and so does "Let Us Not Forget Them," which was written more than ten years later, after Maud and Delos had moved to California.

In 1956, as anybody much over 45 will remember, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary to stamp out a democratic revolution. This poem of Maud's honors the freedom fighters who threw Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest and were arrested and deported by the thousands after the revolt was put down.

I'll give you one more, a whimsical couplet that she wrote after the Apollo II moon landing in July of 1969:

I never saw the sun so fiercely red.
"What about me?" he said.

Bobiana

by Maud Hart Lovelace

"Oh, no, I'll never bob it,
A pity too, you say?
It's a woman's crowning glory,
Don't you think men feel that way?
I can sit on mine--yes, really.
And it makes this graceful knob.
Why, I'd be lost without my hair..."
Next day she got a bob.

"My peeve against a bob is,
The millions that one sees;
It makes all living women
Look as much alike as peas.
It simply kills distinction.
It puts one in the mob.
I'm far too individual..."
Next day she got a bob.

"I like a bob on flappers,
But the middle aged, like me,
Whose weight is creeping upward,
And whose neckline is--Well, see!
On women over twenty,
With looks it just plays hob.
Thank God, I'm much too sensible..."
Next day she got a bob.

"I have a decent profile..."
"I'm as young as Jane, you bet..."
"If I were going to have one,
I know the kind I'd get..."
"Well, since we're going camping,
And long hair's such a job..."
They always get an alibi.
They always get a bob.



The Bird House

by Maud Hart Lovelace

I made a pretty bird house,
And painted it with white,
And reared it in my garden,
Up where the sun was bright.
With such a pleasant bird house,
I looked for birds of fame,
But to my disappointment,
A pair of sparrows came.

Just common English sparrows,
A noisy vulgar pair,
With busy self-absorption,
They set up residence there.
They raised a brood of young ones,
A shrill and greedy lot.
I often watched the family,
Though they observed me not.

And then I fell to thinking,
How God had made this world,
With fields and woods and mountains,
And streams of silver curled;
A planet fit for angels,
For beings bright and gay,
Who robed in shining garments,
Would sit and sing all day.

And we had come upon it,
A noisy vulgar crew,
And there had toiled and squabbled,
And yet been happy too.
It's pleasant to remember,
When loneliness assails,
That I'd not change my sparrows,
No, not for nightingales.

To The Seven

by Maud Hart Lovelace

From New York or Keokuk, Dallas or 'Frisco,
Mobile, Sauk Center, or maybe K.C.
From seven towns anyway, seven Americans
Seven who knew what it meant to be free!

Seven who had gone to school scot free for nothing,
Seven who had gone to what churches they chose,
Seven who had talked and joked, read the news, damned it,
Voted . . . or would pretty soon, I suppose.

Seven Americans, hands tied behind them,
Hands that were firm on a wheel or a plough,
Hands that could joyously curve round a baseball,
Hands that had always been free until now.

Pictures of Keokuk pressed in a pocket,
Faces upturned to a piteous sky,
Seven young faces, so soon to be shattered . . .
Proudly we know that they knew how to die!

Land where you go to school scot free for nothing,
Land where you worship your God as you please,
Land where you read and talk, damn when you care to,
Land of America, get to your knees!

Kneel in the dust where those seven boys crumpled,
Ask for God's mercy, and wisdom to see,
Then lift to Heaven a white and blue banner,
Their hands were fettered, but ours are still free!



We Who Have Seen Mid-Western Oaks Turn Red

by Maud Hart Lovelace

A news cable reports: Out of a total of 814 men reported missing in action in the battle around Faid Pass, 310 came from the rural communities around the town of Red Oak, Iowa, with a total population of 5,736.

We who have seen mid-western oaks turn red,
Deep bloody red in autumn, and have watched
Those red oaks hold their leaves, their stubborn flags
Long after snow concealed the frozen ground,
And other trees were vanquished...
We know how red blood ran at Faid Pass,
We know how sturdy young mid-western hands,
Used to the plough, the harrow and the spade,
Held stubbornly to unaccustomed weapons,
Until unclasped by death.

O Red Oak on the plains of Iowa,
Strong and deep-rooted on your fertile prairies,
Unbent by grief and stern upon your mission,
With swelling hearts and proudly, we salute you!

O Red Oak on the sands of Africa,
Far from the fields you ploughed, the woods you loved,
Your greening town to which the spring, this year,
Comes guiltily, holding back its lilacs...
Valiant and young, you will not be forgotten,
Like blood red leaves, your memory is a banner,
The red oaks proudly fly your flags at home,
And will forever.



Let Us Not Forget Them

by Maud Hart Lovelace

Let us not forget them,
Who were taken off in boxcars,
Sixteen thousand from Budapest alone!
Because they loved freedom.
Tall old Istvan and flashing Margit,
A mother and the little Magda,
Boys of an age to play at ball,
And the strong men.
Let us not forget them,
As the box cars creak away,
Sealed, into Siberia.
It will be cold and bitter there,
Far from the coffee houses
And the paths along the Danube,
No sound of violins!
Let us remember them at Christmas,
Let us pray for them at Holy Easter,
Let us not forget them at Hanukkah and Yom Kippur,
Our remembering will give an immortality
To their living death.

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And will forever.

Merian Lovelace Kirchner is Maud Hart Lovelace's daughter and a regular contributor to the Betsy-Tacy Society Newsletter.



Meeting Highlights

National Society News

by Kelly Reuter

Late-breaking news on page 3!

The Betsy-Tacy Society met at Kelly Reuter's home for their annual Holiday Party and meeting on Saturday, January 14. A sumptuous pot-luck spread was enjoyed by all, before and after the meeting.

The BTS wants to have a good array of memorabilia available for purchase by our members and Betsy-Tacy fans who come to Mankato to visit Deep Valley. The proceeds from sales of these items are what will be used in the future for large events, conventions, and major purchases, such as a house, and the upkeep of any property acquired. Membership fees cover the expenses of the newsletter and mailing, but we need revenues from our products to look ahead to exciting new projects. We are trying to work out agreements with HarperCollins and Deep Valley Creations so that we can continue to give you wonderful Betsy-Tacy related goodies. We thank Merian Kirchner for all her helpfulness and ideas.

The Blue Earth County Historical Society is working on an idea for a coloring book of old Mankato homes. This would include Betsy-Tacy related homes and would make a great souvenir of a visit to Mankato.

The Great Mankato Get-Together is planned for July 7-9, 1995. The schedule of events was discussed and it looks to be a wonderful weekend for meeting and visiting with Betsy-Tacy fans from all over the country. There will be some optional events on Friday and plenty of free time on Saturday to explore Deep Valley. There will be a special children's program on Saturday that will again be coordinated by Renea Ratzloff. Saturday night's event will be a very festive banquet in the Betsy tradition, including entertainments, decorations, and favors. Kelly is in charge of the banquet theme, decorations, and favors

again this year. She mentioned that since we re-created Betsy's Junior year Junior/Senior Banquet in 1992 (complete with blossoms, swing, fish pond, etc.) we could do the Senior year Banquet this year, or save it for the big convention in 1997. She mentioned that the Senior year re-creation would involve the board helping to make little tissue paper frankfurters with fortunes inside. Immediately the board unanimously agreed to save the Senior Banquet idea for 1997. The board members will, no doubt, still be asked to help create some favors along with this year's theme anyway. Cheryl Harness has said that she would like everyone to dress in costume for the banquet and we can have a grand march or promenade. The latter idea met with mixed reviews, but we would all enjoy the costumes and/or hats.

Note: More about the Get-Together on page 4.

There was a short discussion about the availability of Mrs. Chubbock's store and possibilities for its use.

The BTS board met on March 4th at the Heritage Center. The Annual meeting was set for Saturday, April 29 at 1:00 pm at the Heritage Center. Everyone is to bring a snack to share and any artifacts of Betsy-Tacy interest for show-and-tell. Election of board members will take place.

Linda Henry of the Blue Earth County Historical Society read a letter from the State Historical Society informing the BECHS that the Lincoln Park Neighborhood is being considered for the National Register of Historic Places. Such status would make property owners eligible for certain grants. The Betsy-Tacy Society is looking into having such status extended also to 332 Center Street (Tacy's house) and 333 Center Street (Betsy's house).

New York Chapter News

by Merian Kirchner

It was generally agreed that our Second Annual Christmas Party, at Merian's apartment on Saturday, January 7, was even more fun than the First. We talked a lot and laughed a lot and networked a little. We admired the Brass Bowl and the Goethe Cup and pored over Maud's photo albums. We exchanged Christmas tree ornaments and read aloud from *Downtown* about Mrs. Poppy's Christmas party. We also feasted: on oyster stew and pita bread with hummus and crackers and cheese and veggies with dips and crabmeat puffs and molded salad and stollen and pies and cakes and cookies and candy. As Betsy wrote in her Okto Delta minutes, the sistren "are noted for their delicate appetites. But on this occasion they unbent and really ate."

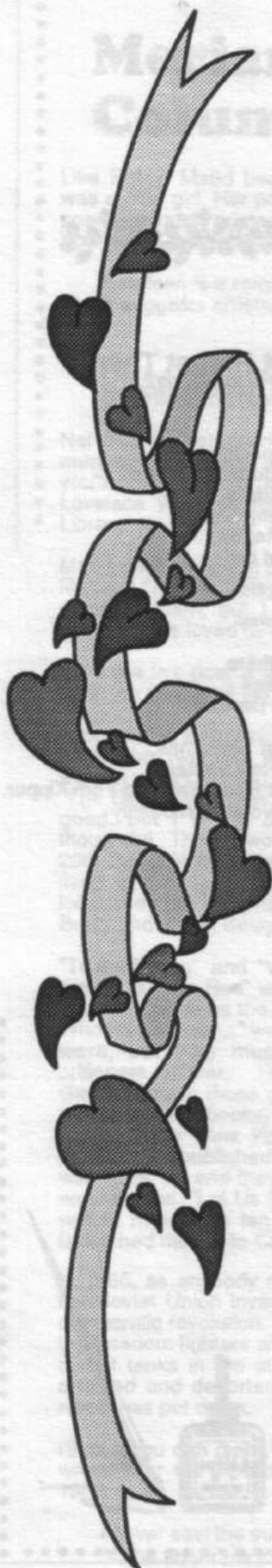
To get the New Year off to a good start, we've earmarked \$100 from the chapter treasury for the purchase from HarperCollins of Betsy-Tacy books in the new library edition that we'll donate to underfunded public school libraries. We'd like to make this a long-term project.

Looking ahead to spring, we're hoping to set up concession stands at block parties around town where we can sell t-shirts and books and spread the word about the Betsy-Tacy Society, the Greater New York Chapter, and Maud Hart Lovelace.

The Chicago Chapter's tea sounded like such an agreeable event that we've decided to have one, too--at a Manhattan hotel in late April, we hope, to celebrate Maud's birthday.

Like Betsy-Tacy people all over, we've been devouring Sharla's *The Betsy - Tacy Companion*. It was worth waiting for, it really was! Sharla plans to make an appearance at a big Manhattan bookstore late in

(continues on next page)



May--the last stop on her tour--and we're looking forward to welcoming her. This will be a chance to celebrate *The Companion*, the new Harper Trophy editions of *Betsy Was a Junior* and *Betsy and Joe*, and the new Abdo and Daughters edition of *The Trees Kneel At Christmas!*

If you'd like a copy of the Maud and Delos in Manhattan booklet that we produced for our October walking tour, you'll find a handy form on page 15.

Greater Chicago Chapter News

by Melanie Rigney

The Greater Chicago Chapter of BTS met on Saturday, January 21. A snowy day in the Chicago area prompted us to plan our calendar for all of 1995! Here's what we will be doing:

Sunday, March 19: Sharla Whalen planned to be at Borders in Oakbrook to sign copies of *The Betsy-Tacy Companion*. The chapter planned a brief business meeting before the signing, and planned to sell some merchandise and offer refreshments.

Saturday, June 10: (Note: This is the correct date rather than the date listed in the local newsletter.) Melanie Rigney will host "Sunday night lunch" at her home at 5000 N. Delphia Avenue in Chicago, and then any interested members will proceed to the annual Brandeis book sale. Members are also invited to meet at the sale; please wear a Betsy-Tacy t-shirt or button. "Lunch" will be 4:00-6:00 pm; we'll meet outside the Brandeis tent at about 7:00 pm or look for us inside. This year the sale will be held in the parking lot of the Northbrook Mall. If you're planning to attend, please leave Melanie a list of authors for whom you're searching at (312) 625-2430; if you're

planning to come to lunch, please let her know by Wednesday, May 31. The point at the book sale will be to gather up all the books we can by the authors we want, then sort out what we have. Frieda Maheras has done this with Phantom Friends and says it's a lot of fun.

Friday, July 7-Sunday, July 9: Karen Nolan and Maureen Eichinger are organizing transportation for the Chicago contingent to get to the Mankato meeting. Details have been published in the chapter newsletter; if you missed it or need more information, please call Maureen at (312) 622-1081 or Karen at (312) 528-5284.

Saturday, September 16: We finally go back to the Schiller Park Library for a regular business meeting at 1:00 pm. If there's enough interest we'll organize at that meeting a chapter outing to the Pullman House Walk on October 7 or 8. If you're interested in going on the house walk (cost will be around \$8) but won't be at the meeting, please call Melanie.

Saturday, November 18: Holiday party for the kids at Schiller Park Library.

Saturday, December 2-Sunday, December 3: Greater Chicago Chapter trip to Milwaukee! More details will follow in the national and local newsletters. All Betsy-Tacy Society members are welcome. When we went in 1993, we had a great time, seeing many of the sites Maud saw when she visited Tib, eating wonderful German food and socializing. The registration cost, which excluded hotel but included Saturday lunch and dinner and Sunday breakfast, was around \$65. We've got some interesting ideas this time; some facets of the trip will be the same, but others will be distinctly different!

In other chapter news: Debbie Tranchita will be vice-president for 1995; Our November tea raised \$225 each for the Maud Hart Lovelace House Fund and for putting books in area libraries; Audrey Faber has agreed to supervise where the books go; We had 94 members as of the meeting; Minus the amount being sent to national for the house fund, we had \$810.20 in checking, \$352.81 in savings, and \$92.76 in petty cash.

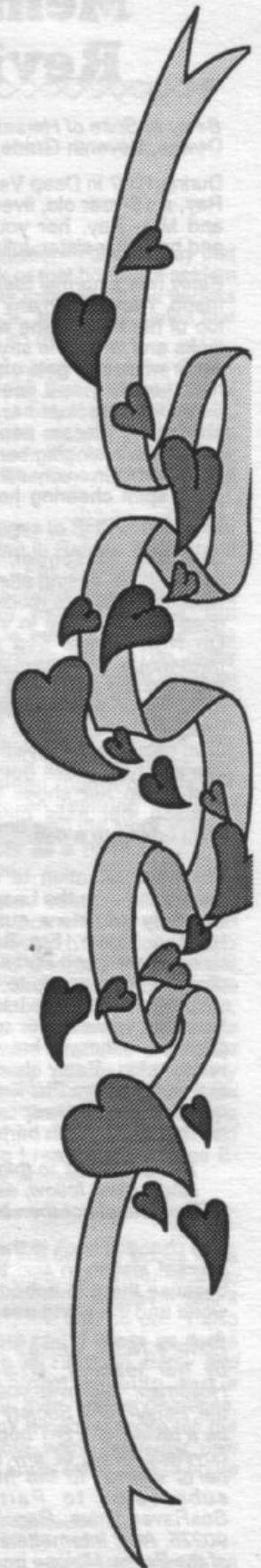
Greater Los Angeles Chapter News

by Alston Ahern

The second meeting of the newly-formed Greater Los Angeles Chapter will take place on Saturday, May 27, from 10:00 am to 12 noon. We'll be meeting at the Westside Pavilion Community Room B (10800 West Pico Blvd., corner of Pico and Westwood) in West Los Angeles. We do need to vacate the room by noon, but since there are many restaurants nearby (the meeting room itself is just off the mall's food court), it's expected that many of the sistren will go out to lunch following the meeting. We'll be discussing *Betsy-Tacy* at this meeting, so read up! Bring any passages you'd like to share, etc.

We'll also be discussing ways that we can get more of the books into public and school libraries, so bring your ideas for that. And if you're willing to join the "traveling readers" (as in have book, will travel) - and read *Betsy-Tacy* stories in libraries, book stores, schools, etc., bring your ideas for starting that.

Contact Steering Committee Chair Alston Ahern at (213) 344-7123, or other members Suzanne Nezin (714) 770-8236 or Mary Kay Adams (818) 795-6189 for more information.



Member Review

Betsy In Spite of Herself, reviewed by Anika Dewan, Seventh Grade, Fullerton, California

During 1907 in Deep Valley, Minnesota, Betsy Ray, a 15-year old, lives with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Ray, her younger sister Margaret and her older sister Julia.

Betsy has a normal teenage life with her best friend, Tacy, with many goals and boys at the top of her mind. She worries about how she looks and what she says. She wants to be a writer when she gets older and adores writing her thoughts and feelings in her journal. Betsy loves to hear her sister, Julia, sing and play many classic songs. She sometimes joins Julia in singing her favorite tunes. Betsy participates in many school activities and has great spirit cheering her friends on at many events.

One day at school, Betsy notices Phil Brandish not paying attention to her and that's when she plans to modify herself. Betsy then goes to Milwaukee to visit Tib for Christmas. On New Year's Eve she changes to the mysterious and dramatic Betsy: She will start signing her name Betsye, not laugh so much, seldom smile, keep her voice low, wear green, wear emeralds, be lavish with Jockey Club perfume, be lavish with foreign phrases, see that her blouse does not come out of her skirt, keep her shoes polished, her clothes pressed, her nails manicured, and take at least one bath a day.

Phil pays attention to the new Betsy and goes with her to the Leap Year dance, but one day they get into a quarrel. They soon get together again, but Betsy now can't help being herself and Phil notices that. He is not pleased. She starts to laugh and smile a lot which Betsye never used to do. She didn't keep her voice low or use very many foreign phrases, either. That was the end of their relationship. Betsy observes that it wasn't the real Betsy whom Phil liked. She remembers a quote from Shakespeare which Julia was reciting once which pertained to her life:

*This above all, to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.*

She changed back to the real Betsy and learnt a great lesson in life: to always be yourself because there is nobody else like you in the world and the world needs you.

Editor's Note: Anika's review was submitted by her teacher, BTS member Elizabeth Holloman. We invite you to submit a review to the Betsy-Tacy Society Newsletter. It could be a review of a B-T book, another Maud Hart Lovelace book, or any book you think might be of interest to the members. Send your submission to Patty Warhol, 32228 SeaRaven Drive, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275. Attn: Internetters. How about a review of the Beany Malone books?

Notes & Notices

Information about Minneapolis in July

We've received a reminder from Maryellen Digre-Mueller that a 10,000 person convention will be held in Minneapolis at about the same time as the Great Mankato Get-Together in July, so if you're planning to stay in Minneapolis between July 3-6, be sure to make early reservations.

Also, if anyone wants a copy of the 2-page list of Betsy-Tacy things to do in Minneapolis, send an S.A.S.E. to:

Maryellen Digre-Mueller
4629 Columbus Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

and she'll send it out.

The "Maud Hart in College" walking tour at the University of Minnesota will be offered Thursday, July 6 at 10:30 am and Monday, July 10 at 2:00 pm. Please call Peg Wolff at (612) 626-8687 by June 30 for reservations.

News From HarperCollins

Betsy Was a Junior and *Betsy and Joe* will be published in their new Harper Trophy editions before you read this newsletter. This will be the first time all four high school stories are out in paperback--and the first time in years that the last two have been available in bookstores at all.

HarperCollins has decided to replace Diane Goode as cover artist for *Betsy and the Great World* and *Betsy's Wedding*. Unfortunately, the commissioning of a new artist will mean a year's delay in the publication of these two--from Spring/Summer 1995 to Spring/Summer 1996. But remember that just three years ago you'd have had a hard time finding a single Betsy-Tacy book in a bookstore anywhere, and the series was on its way out of print. A little over a year from now, all ten Betsy-Tacys will be back. We've done pretty well haven't we?

Now it's time to get really serious about seeing that the three Deep Valley stories--*Carney's House Party*, *Emily of Deep Valley*, and *Winona's Pony Cart*--get back in print, too. If you haven't done so, write to

Ginee Seo, Editor
Harper Trophy Paperback Books
10 East 53rd Street
New York, NY 10022

to encourage re-printing of these titles.

Betsy in Germany

Leslie Croce has written a very interesting account of a "Betsy in Germany" tour that she created for herself recently. Look for an "armchair version" of her trip in the Newsletter soon! Leslie would like to give the Lang family, whom she met on her trip, a copy of *Betsy and the Great World*. Can anyone help her obtain one?

Leslie also writes, "Is anybody out there a literary agent, or does anybody know of a good agent who might take on a new writer?"

Contact: Leslie Croce, Ramstein Elementary School, PSC 2 Box 9729
APO AE 09012

Another Book Request

Myrna Dillon is looking for a book mentioned in the Betsy-Tacy Newsletter's Winter 1994-95 issue. It's *Victorian Family Celebrations* by Sarah Breathnach. Can anyone help? Write to Myrna at 1221 Phillips Street, Long Beach, CA 90805.

Stop!

Stop!

Stop!

Do it right now!

Do it right now!

Do it right now!

Do what?

Turn to the back cover of this newsletter and look at the date printed just above your name. If it says

Spring, 95

then your membership in the Betsy-Tacy Society is expiring! You need to renew NOW to avoid missing a newsletter.

Michele Franck, our Corresponding Secretary, will take care of your renewal if you'll make a copy of the membership form on the inside back cover (we know you don't want to cut up your copy!) and send it with your check to the address on the form. **Do it right now!**

From the desk of

Lona Falenczykowski
Betsy-Tacy Society President

April 21, 1995

Greetings:

I would first like to thank the Chicago Chapter for the generous contribution to the house fund. This may come in handy. The house at 332 Center Street (Tacy's) has been offered for sale as a HUD house. The Betsy-Tacy Society put in a bid and were outbid. However, that deal fell through. We will have a chance to try again. If our bid is accepted, we will need to do some serious fundraising.

The Betsy-Tacy Society will hold a raffle or silent auction as a fundraiser at our summer get-together. Judy Mans donated a small stool for a raffle or silent auction. She found this stool 30-some years ago in the attic of the High Street house (Maud's house). We would appreciate further contributions from our members of such items as books, sheet music, any turn-of the century items, card-carrying cases, extreme violet perfume bottles, etc., Please write or send them to The Betsy-Tacy Society, c/o Blue Earth County Historical Society, 415 Cherry Street, Mankato, MN 56001.

Cordially,
 Lona
 Lona

See update, page 3



About the Order Forms

We try to make it easy for you to obtain publications which are produced by the Society and its chapters. For that reason, the order form for Greater New York's *Maud and Delos in Manhattan Tour Booklet* is printed here.

Sharla Whalen's book is, of course, not a publication of the Society. However, we have to face the fact that while all of us consider books that have anything to do with Maud Hart Lovelace to be of considerable interest, many bookstores do not carry books that are not sought after by the general public. Many Betsy-Tacy Society members interested in Sharla's book have told us that their local bookstore is not able to help them obtain a copy. Should you not be able to find a copy locally, the publisher does accept orders for single copies and the order blank is for your convenience.

Order Form

To: Fitzwilliam Books
 P.O. Box 3216
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Celebrate Maud and Delos' Years in Greenwich Village!

The *Maud and Delos in Manhattan Tour Booklet* is now available! It includes:

- Excerpts from Maud's diaries (1928 - 1930);
- A short history of Maud and Delos' years in Manhattan - what they were writing and what they did for fun;
- Lovelace press items, pictures, letters and telegrams;
- A self-guided walking tour of Greenwich Village, listing artists' and writers' houses;
- Information about a famous speakeasy that Delos and Maud visited.

To order, return this form (or a copy) along with a check for \$8 for each booklet ordered. Make check payable to **Greater New York Chapter of the Betsy-Tacy Society.**

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From Our Mailbox

"After searching unsuccessfully for over a year through second hand stores for copies of *Emily of Deep Valley*, *Winona's Pony Cart*, and *Carney's House Party*, I mentioned my problem to my friendly local librarian. I learned that our library could borrow books from other libraries in other cities, not just from the local branches. So I gave her the names of the books, and she tracked them all down over a period of several weeks. The books came from all over the state, and I was thrilled to finally be able to answer the question of whatever happened between Carney and Larry. I've read numerous letters about the difficulties in locating these books, so it might be worth a try to check with your local library to see if they can help."

Tracey A. Martin, Cincinnati, OH



"I have a vivid recollection of falling off my chair in the library laughing at the "lock of hair in the pill box" incident in *Betsy, Tacy and Tib*. I went on to read and reread every one of the Maud Hart Lovelace *Betsy-Tacy* series as well as the other books based in Deep Valley. I really felt like I knew Betsy. One of the high points of my life and the only "fan" thing I've ever done was to meet Maud Hart Lovelace. We had moved to Glendora, California, and I bought a copy of *Betsy's Wedding* for my daughter. The back flyleaf of the cover said Mrs. Lovelace was living in Pomona, California. This was about 1977 or 78. I thought of ways of finding where she lived such as writing the publisher, but I finally picked up the phone and asked Directory Assistance. I got her number. She was living in a nursing home in Claremont, which borders Pomona. I got up my nerve to actually call. She answered and I introduced myself as a fan. The first thing she told me was that she had almost died the night before and the paramedics had to come. We talked for a few minutes and I asked how she felt. She said she was feeling fine and had been up and around. I asked her if she was up to saying hello and signing a book. She seemed

pleased at the prospect so a few evenings later my daughter, Bonnie, and I drove to meet her. A program was being presented to the residents and after it was over I went up to her and introduced myself and my daughter. She smiled and I could see the famous gap in her two front teeth. She was in the midst of several friends (like Betsy always was) and the friends were anxious to tell me she was an author. She was friendly and gracious for the few minutes we stayed, and I had the strange sensation of knowing someone very well who didn't know me at all. I had started this adventure with trepidation because I usually don't do such things, and I didn't want to intrude if she were ill. However, she seemed to be feeling well and made me feel welcome. That short visit is one of my treasured memories. I am delighted to have found just the right group to share it with!"

Diane Campbell, Glendora, CA



"I believe that my family may have set a Betsy-Tacy record. I have been reading a few copies of the Betsy-Tacy Society Newsletter recently and have seen lots of long-time fans, lots of parents passing their love of Betsy-Tacy on to their girls, and even Linda Larsen's husband enjoying her reading to him. But this may be a record - my child could be the youngest MALE Betsy-Tacy fan in the world! I started reading to Zeban right after my mother, a Betsy-Tacy Society member, gave the new editions of the first four books to him for his third birthday. (I had actually read the first two to him at the age of two, but he doesn't remember.) He is dying to get to "go downtown" so he insists that I read two or three chapters a night and if I'm not home at bedtime, Daddy gets to read it (Daddy also listens in on my nights). He'll be happy soon since the trio just did the cat duet and saved Naifi, which means we're almost there. Now his favorite pastime is to "play Betsy-Tacy, Mommy!" I am Betsy since my hair is long and can be put in braids, he is Tacy since he

identifies with her shyness, and lucky Daddy gets to be Tib, or Mrs. Chubbock, or Julia or whatever character is needed to complete the game. He directs us to play school and we both sit on a bench after crying on Mrs. Chubbock's steps. We all three sit on benches and talk about Heaven. We "learn to fly" and float around on feathers discussing what we see below. It is a joy, to say the least, for me to have such an interested, imaginative young boy. Not only does he love Betsy-Tacy, but both my husband and I are eagerly awaiting the outcome of the quarrel of who will be "Queen o' the Summer." Zeban's play changes and expands daily as we get further along in the books. As long as he is interested I will continue reading, buying the later books as they are published. Who knows, he may have lived through *Betsy's Wedding* by the time he is five."

Carrie Gorman, Tenants Harbor, ME



"Currently I am a children's librarian in Phoenix, Arizona. However, when I was a little girl growing up in East Tennessee, I read all the Betsy-Tacy books. To say that I read these books is an understatement. I LIVED them. I actually went through several years where my imaginary world was the world of Deep Valley and my best friends were Betsy, Tacy, Tib, Winona and all the rest of the gang. I grew up in a tiny Appalachia town, but spent summers on my grandmother's farm in rural Minnesota, near Worthington. Every two weeks the bookmobile would come to Rushmore and I would ride my bike into town and get books to read. I would pretend that I was going to the Carnegie Library and that Miss Sparrow was helping me. There was usually at least one Betsy-Tacy book on the truck. That was how I read *Winona's Pony Cart*. I would love to have a copy of that book now!"

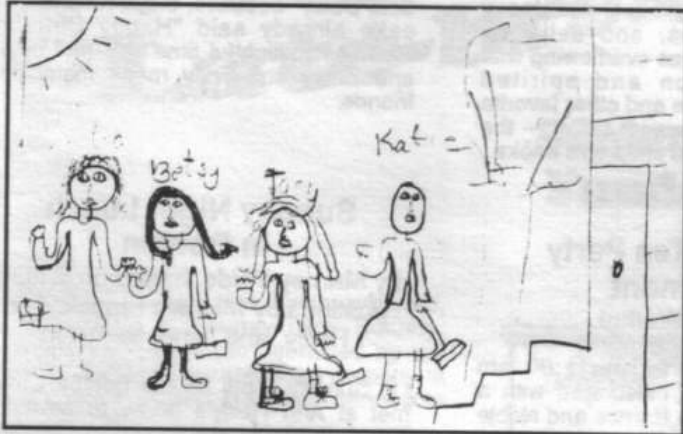
Marijo Duncan, Phoenix, AZ

We'd love to hear from you! Even if you're regularly posting your ideas on the listserv maud-L (see page 5), please remember that not all Society members are able to participate. For that reason, we urge you to continue sharing your thoughts with others via *From Our Mailbox*. Address correspondence to: Debbie Tranchita, 6221 N. Niagara, Chicago, IL 60631. Due to space limitations we are not able to print all letters and we may need to edit letters. Should you wish to respond to one of the letter-writers whose letter appeared in *From Our Mailbox*, please address her c/o Michele Franck, Post Office Box 2903, Framingham, MA 01701.

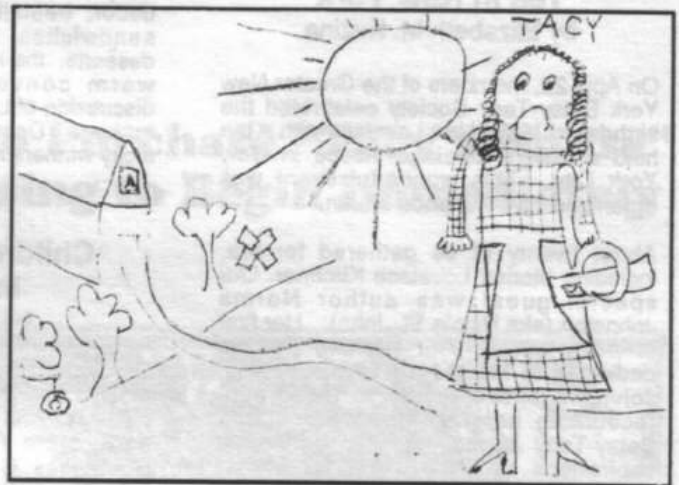
Children's Page

Artists' Guild: Betsy and Tacy Enter School

The Winter, 1995 issue invited children to submit drawings that interpreted Betsy and Tacy's first day of school. Here are the entries!



Audrey Gauss of Winston-Salem, North Carolina is the artist of this picture. Audrey is 8 years old. In the note she sent with her picture, she mentioned that she loves the Betsy-Tacy books and that her mom and she read *The Trees Kneel at Christmas* over the holidays.



The artist of this picture is Jeanie Catron. Jean is 9 years old and lives in Hampstead, Maryland.



Orly Nussbaum of Skokie, Illinois is the artist of this picture. Orly is 9 years old.



This drawing of Tib was also submitted. The artist is Emily Monforton of Northville, Minnesota. Emily is 11 years old.

Send material for this page to Renea Ratzloff, 2324 Fair St., Mankato, MN 56001.

The Maud Hart Lovelace's Birthday Remembered

Here are reports of three celebrations that we've heard about!

Tea in New York

by Elizabeth M. Kuzina

On April 22, members of the Greater New York Betsy-Tacy Society celebrated the birthday of Maud Hart Lovelace with a tea held at King's Carriage House in New York City. This wonderful event was organized by Constance Martin.

About twenty of us gathered for tea, including Merian Lovelace Kirchner. Our special guest was author Norma Johnston (aka Nicole St. John). Her first of many books, *The Wishing Star*, is dedicated to Maud Hart Lovelace. Ms. Johnston spoke briefly to the group, recounting her first discovery of the Betsy-Tacy books, and her own early aspirations to be a writer for young people. She began corresponding with Mrs. Lovelace, and the two eventually met. Ms. Johnston described the support and encouragement Mrs. Lovelace had given her as a friend and as a writer. Both Maud and Delos Lovelace offered her advice about the editing and publishing process. By sharing her memories of Mrs. Lovelace with humor and grace, Ms. Johnston succeeded in giving us a more intimate look at Maud Hart Lovelace.

King's Carriage House was a lovely place to spend the afternoon with other Betsy-

Tacy fans. In addition to the charming decor, beautiful English china, fancy sandwiches, scones, and delicious desserts, the room was overflowing with warm conversation and spirited discussion of Lovelace and other favorite authors. Door prizes were raffled -- the lucky winners received children's books.

Children's Tea Party in Vermont

by Patty Warhol

On Saturday, April 29 at 11:00 am Maud's birthday was celebrated with a lovely tea party at the Barnes and Noble book store in Burlington, Vermont. Hostesses Carrie Jewkes, Assistant Manager of the book store and a BTS member (wearing a sailor suit), and Jamie Schettino, a school teacher and also a BTS member (wearing a Victorian lace dress), welcomed 18 girls and boys to the festivities. A birthday cake proclaiming "Happy Birthday, Maud!" in (of course) green icing was served, along with cookies and grapes and strawberries, lemonade and tea.

The program featured Jamie, who read the birthday party segment from *Betsy-Tacy* to the celebrants. When the time came to sing "Happy Birthday" the

children chose to sing "Happy Birthday, dear Betsy" because, they reasoned, the cake already said "Happy Birthday, Maud." A delightful time was had by all, and Betsy and Tacy made many new friends.

Sunday Night Lunch in Boston

by Marney Wilde, based on listserv postings by Michele Franck, Ann Reilly, and Janet Hamilton

On Sunday, April 23 the Boston Crowd met at Ann Reilly's home to celebrate Maud's birthday and to surprise Michele Franck and Janet Hamilton. Both were indeed surprised since each believed that she was planning a shower for the other! An engagement shower was Michele's surprise; Janet was honored with a baby shower.

The group feasted on onion sandwiches and fudge. Everybody sang songs from Maud's era; having no piano didn't dampen the festivities in the least! Janet has researched and prepared a "Book of Games" that Betsy's friends played; the Boston group had an outrageous time playing "Consequences." All twelve participants are ready to do it again!

Postings, continued from page 7

It is interesting to see why we like Betsy so much. She did have the socializing that would've been nice, but at the same time her concerns weren't so SERIOUS! I skipped the Young Adult section of the library and went from Children's to Adults (and back and forth again) because the Young Adult angst was beyond me.

Betsy had problems, but they weren't ones like abusive parents, drug adventures, having a baby as a teenager, running away, etc. which seem to be the topics of a lot of the Young Adult books. I couldn't relate. Sure I had teenage confusion, but things weren't THAT bad for me (and I am grateful, thank you) so I couldn't relate to the desire to run away or otherwise escape.

I know that some of you have said you felt you could almost live in the books while

you were reading them. I experienced that as well. I'm sure all of our lives have been difficult or troubling at times. There are delightful things about life, but also big, real problems in the world. To me, Deep Valley was sort of a mini Utopia. A place where everything wasn't perfect (Tacy's baby sister died, for instance; also the town was somewhat less than welcoming to the Syrians), but where things were really pretty nice overall.

There are so many things I like about the books! I love the friendships which are made and which endure, and the daily struggles of childhood and adolescence which are given their due significance--the disillusionments, the triumphs, the confusion, the heartbreak, and the

happiness. The thrill of going to the library for the first time! Your first crush on a boy! The agonizing over how to act! The crushing disappointment when the boy likes someone else! Writing to a celebrity! Seeing your first play! So many simple things, but things which we, many of us, did and enjoyed as children. Maud writes so believably about these things; it's never forced or condescending or self-conscious.

I felt like the people in the books became my friends--good friends--and like I could be friends with them too!! You learn so much about them, and I just think I would've "fit in." When I read the Betsy books I feel like I am home.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

A Lamp Explodes at T. W. Hart's Residence

Mankato Free Press, September 25, 1895

Mr. and Mrs. T W. Hart spent last evening at the home of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Hunt, and left at 10:30 o'clock. On nearing the house they saw flames within, through the windows, and on entering found that the large hanging lamp over the dining room table had exploded, setting fire to the table linen, which was blazing up. They extinguished the fire without much difficulty, Mr. Hart gathering up the table cloth with the silver ware, etc. and throwing the whole thing out of doors. His right hand was painfully burned.

It is thought that when the servant girl attempted to extinguish the lamp she turned the wick up by mistake, instead of downward. The lamp must have smoked for a long time, as the paper and everything in the room was black with soot, and the smoke had penetrated the room above where the two little girls and the servant were sleeping, and even

blackened their faces. The loss from fire and smoke will be from \$150 to \$300, with no insurance on the articles burned, which included some pretty handmade tidies, etc. The rooms must be repapered at the expense of the insurance company.

The lamp must have exploded just previous to the return of Mr. and Mrs. Hart, otherwise the fire would have been further advanced. Had they remained away longer, it is sad to think what might have occurred, with the children sound asleep above the fire. Mr. Hart showed much presence of mind in putting out the fire, and he naturally feels thankful that he arrived at the opportune moment that he did.

Note: The "two little girls" are, of course, Maud (Betsy) and Kathleen (Julia).

The Mankato Free Press was run by F. W. Hunt (Winona's father). We thank Jo Schultz, a volunteer at the Blue Earth County Historical Society, for submitting this alarming article.



The "Hill Street" house at 333 Center.

Betsy-Tacy Society Membership Form

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

Make checks payable to the Betsy-Tacy Society and send, along with this form, to:

Michele Franck, Post Office Box 2903, Framingham, MA 01701

Historic Fort Snelling

by Maryellen Digre-Mueller

Fort Snelling has played an important part in Minnesota's history and several of Maud Hart Lovelace's books. All Civil War volunteers trained at Fort Snelling, including Emily's grandfather (*Emily of Deep Valley*) and Carney's great-uncle, Aaron Sibley. *Betsy's Wedding* tells us of Joe and Sam going through World War I officer training there.

A visit to Historic Fort Snelling lets us see, touch, and experience *Early Candlelight*,

Maud's historical novel of life at Fort Snelling in the 1830's and 1840's. Once there, you can marvel at Maud's work as an historian and author. The site manager of Historic Fort Snelling read *Early Candlelight* when he lived in the officers' quarters at the fort. He reports that Maud's descriptions of the fort and fort life are uncanny.

Thanks to the Minnesota Historical Society, much of the original fort has been restored and is open from May to October each year. There is an interpretive program, with staff dressed in historical dress re-creating fort life in the year 1827. Soldiers practice cannon and musket drills. Blacksmiths, carpenters, and servants

perform their duties and share gossip and information with visitors. The Sutler store sells provisions to everyone. A detailed and well-written brochure makes possible an excellent self-guided tour of the fort, allowing visitors to investigate things that interest them at their own pace, an important strategy for families.

Historic Fort Snelling and the surrounding area offer so many things to see. The wind-swept grounds of the Fort and spectacular views of the Mississippi River gorge are a visual feast for anyone interested in frontier life. River enthusiasts may see and walk on the banks of the Mighty Mississippi.

The area around Historic Fort Snelling is excellent for recreation. There are picnic grounds and hiking trails around the fort. Nearby Fort Snelling State Park expands the area and offers boat and canoe access to the river. The Fort Snelling Military Reservation has a public golf course and polo grounds. For more information on Historic Fort Snelling's programs and self-guided tours, contact Historic Fort Snelling, Fort Snelling History Center, St. Paul, MN 55111. Telephone: (612) 726-1171 Monday - Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm CST.



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