



Deep Valley Sun

NEWSLETTER OF THE BETSY-TACY SOCIETY

To promote and preserve Maud Hart Lovelace's legacy and her work, encourage and support literacy and conserve historic landmarks in Mankato

VOL. 9 ISSUE 1

SPRING 2013

Remembering the 2012 Betsy-Tacy Convention

By Susan Brown
Past President of BTS



The 2012 Betsy-Tacy Convention is a lovely memory! How does one summarize such a fun-filled event into one newsletter article? When I asked people to share a thought or favorite memory, I soon learned that everyone who attended went home with their own special memories and favorite moments.

After careful planning and excited anticipation, the convention began at the registration table on July 19 at the DoubleTree Hotel in Bloomington. My husband Bob, our granddaughter Molly, our friend (and faithful BTS volunteer) Kathryn Hanson, and I arrived after an early morning

start to get our name tags and our packets for the day. Excitement and happy greetings were everywhere as fans of all ages gathered to celebrate Maud, her books, and precious friendships!

After many hugs, greetings, laughter, and introductions among this amazing

delegation of friends, the buses headed to Mueller Park, the site of the Hart home. Members of the Maud Hart Lovelace Society guided us as we explored the Lowry Hill neighborhood in Minneapolis.

When we reached the Bow Street house, we all patiently and excitedly waited to go inside. Colleen O'Neil sat at the bow window to keep people moving. She said, "I saw eyes and whole faces just light up with joy at being in a place where Betsy and Joe had lived and begun their married life. It was a huge privilege to get to be there." It was a highlight moment for every one of us!

The day also included standing in front of the Canoe Place house, going to Minnehaha Park to eat box lunches, and gathering at the Kerlan Collection of Children's Literature at the University of Minnesota. Certainly another highlight of the day was when

authors Heather Vogel Frederick and Amy Dolnick Rechner shared their stories and signed their books. It was special for me to be there with our daughter Sally, her daughter Molly, and our friend Kathryn – four generations of Betsy-Tacy readers who were part of the standing ovation for Heather and Amy.



And then the convention moved on to Mankato. I knew Jackie Hilgert and her crew were busy setting up Willard's Emporium at the convention center, and Susan Orchard was checking final preparations at the B-T houses. Things were ready to go, and I looked forward to the evening session when I would welcome people from 33 states and 3 countries to Deep Valley!

Convention days were filled with celebration and sharing. It was a pleasure to greet members and guests at the Betsy-Tacy houses. For a few days we went back in time to long dresses, fancy hats, a bench, onion sandwiches, and remi-

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The Betsy-Tacy Society

Est. 1990

P.O. Box 94
Mankato, MN 56002-0094
(507) 345-9777
or (507) 345-8903
www.betsy-tacysociety.org
501(c)3 organization

BTS Staff

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Anne Sweeney

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Annual Membership Levels

Basic..... \$25.00
Patron..... \$50.00
Silver..... \$100.00
Gold..... \$250.00
Lifetime..... \$500.00

Contact information:

Mail:
Betsy-Tacy Society
P.O. Box 94, Mankato, MN 56002
BTSMankato@gmail.com
Membership:
membership@betsy-tacysociety.org
Shop: shopkeeper@betsy-tacysociety.org

Shop Catalog:

Shop our online catalog:
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Credit cards & PayPal available.
For a catalog: send a self-addressed,
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Mankato, MN 56002-0094 and
mark CATALOG on the front of the
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Tacy's House and Gift Shop

March - December:
Open every Saturday 12 noon - 3 p.m.
Closed: January - February
Tacy's House is located at 332 Center
Street in Mankato and Betsy's House
is at 333 Center Street. Check the BTS
website for current admission fees.
NO admission to gift shop only. BTS
members are admitted free during
regular hours.

Special House Visits:

Call (507) 345-9777 or (507) 345-8903
For special house visits, advance res-
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or school groups. Or, call for more
details.

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June 29, 2012-March 20 2013

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All Gifts to BTS are Gratefully Appreciated

The BTS gratefully acknowl-
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Betsy Tacy Convention**

Gifts \$1,000 to \$1,499

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Message from the President...

Dear Friends:

In 1990, a small group of Mankato women began a journey through the Winding Hall of Fate, starting with a commitment to keep the Betsy-Tacy books in print, and expanding and moving onward to preserve and refurbish the houses where Maud and her best friend, Bick, grew up. The Betsy-Tacy books are back in print in beautiful editions, thanks in large part to Jennifer Hart, editor at Harper Perennial. Betsy's and Tacy's houses have been restored and are now owned free and clear. This would not have been possible without the generosity and support of you, our Betsy-Tacy Society members.

In 2009 and again in 2012, a small group of volunteers came together and organized two wonderful conventions. Both conventions resulted in very significant donations to the Betsy-Tacy Society. My deepest thanks to all involved.

We are so grateful for the loyalty and goodwill you have given the BTS through the years. With your help, we will continue to keep the legacy of Maud Hart Lovelace alive in Deep Valley.

Lona

Leah Klammer
 Breigha Kotulski
 Barbara Lamson
 Candy Laven
 Doug Laven
 Eloise Layman
 Levi Leskey
 *Jillian Lieferman
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In recognizing our 2012 BTS Volunteers we realize we may have missed someone and if so we would like to hear from you.

Treasury Notes

Kathy Mork, BTS Treasurer

Although it appears that our operations in 2012 showed a sizable loss, much of that is due to depreciation on the houses and office equipment. We've established some new accounting procedures that have helped us watch both our income and expenses more closely.

The portions of the financial statement allotted to the convention reflect the shop sales from that weekend as well as proceeds from the silent auction and the profit from the box lunches.

The final column, Restricted Funds, reflects those donations that were specifically made to the restoration and endowment funds.

What the income statement doesn't show is that we were able to pay off over \$4,000 of street improvement assessments this year. Once again, the Betsy-Tacy Society is debt free!

It's been a busy year for us. We saw an increase in visitors during our regular hours, as well as in special tours, shop sales, memberships, and donations. Our staff has worked hard to share Betsy and Tacy's Deep Valley with people locally, nationally, and internationally.

Betsy-Tacy Convention

The Convention Committee has sent the BTS a check for over \$11,000! When I first received the e-mail telling us of this generous donation, I had to check to make sure the amount was correct. Of that amount, \$2,500 will be placed in a special account to be used as seed money for the next convention. Radhika Breaden and Barb Fecteau, the chairs of the 2012 Convention Committee, have requested that this money be considered a loan and that the fund be maintained for all future conventions.

The rest of the committee's donation will be put into a sustaining fund that may become the base for an endowment fund.

We are incredibly grateful to the committee for its hard work to make this a successful and extremely profitable event!

2012 Treasurer's Report

| | <u>Operation</u> | <u>Convention</u> | <u>Restricted Funds</u> | <u>Total 2012</u> |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Ordinary Income/Expense | | | | |
| Income | | | | |
| Admissions | 4,733.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 4,733.00 |
| Total Contributions Income | 13,153.53 | 6,454.00 | 1,334.00 | 20,941.53 |
| Fundraising | 2,510.11 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 2,510.11 |
| Interest Income | 117.68 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 117.68 |
| Membership Dues | 8,900.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 8,900.00 |
| Merchandise Sales | 15,753.87 | 6,299.47 | | 22,053.34 |
| Shipping and Delivery Income | <u>1,584.96</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>1,584.96</u> |
| Total Income | <u>46,753.15</u> | <u>12,753.47</u> | <u>1,334.00</u> | <u>60,840.62</u> |
| Total Cost of Goods Sold | <u>8,160.90</u> | <u>3,086.30</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>11,247.20</u> |
| Gross Profit | 38,592.25 | 9,667.17 | 1,334.00 | <u>49,593.42</u> |
| Total Expense | <u>44,087.10</u> | <u>755.85</u> | <u>0.00</u> | <u>44,842.95</u> |
| Net Ordinary Income | <u>-5,494.85</u> | <u>8,911.32</u> | <u>1,334.00</u> | <u>4,750.47</u> |

For a detailed financial statement and balance sheet, contact Kathy Mork at klmork@yahoo.com.

Collected Stories of Maud Hart Lovelace

Volume One

By Julie A. Schrader

“Having watched other collaborators getting into each other’s hair and on each other’s nerves, we have reached the conclusion that happy collaborations, like happy marriages, are made in heaven.”

Maud Hart Lovelace

“The Lovelaces seem to do the impossible. They are writers who can actually work together day after day without the lightning of clashing temperaments...Maud does all the historical research, Delos all of the plots.” (Nassau Daily Review-Star, 9/25/1941)

Maud began writing poems and stories when she was a young girl. She wrote: “When I was ten, my father, I hope at not too great an expense, had printed a booklet of my earliest rhymes. Soon after I started bombarding the magazines and sold my first story when I was eighteen.”

In January 1911, Maud’s parents sent her to San Diego to stay with her grandmother, Albertina Palmer Austin, to recuperate after an appendectomy. Here she continued to write and submit short stories, receiving a great deal of support from her uncle, Frank Palmer. When preparing to return to Minnesota in June of that year, Maud picked up a copy of the *Los Angeles Times Sunday* magazine, and to her surprise found that it had printed her first story, “Number Eight.”

As much as Maud believed she was born to be a writer, Delos grew up knowing he would be a newspaperman. After high school he worked as a newspaper reporter in Fargo, N.D., and later in Minneapolis. Delos and Maud met in 1915 and married on November 29, 1917. After completing his military service in World War I, Delos returned to the Minneapolis Tribune.

The Lovelaces left Minneapolis in 1920 and moved to New York City. Delos worked in Manhattan for the New York Daily News as a reporter and copy editor until illness

forced him to resign in 1923, and he and Maud moved back to Minnesota.

Delos was a freelance writer for seven years and quickly became a successful story writer. He sold 50 stories to a single large national magazine and was paid up to \$1,000 each for them. His stories sold to all of the popular magazines in the 1920s, such as *Country Gentlemen*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *the Ladies Home Journal*.

The Lovelaces wrote short stories prolifically, both individually and together. For every short story sold there were also rejection letters. “When I saw how well his stories sold,” Maud said, “I decided that maybe I wasn’t cut out to be a short story writer.”

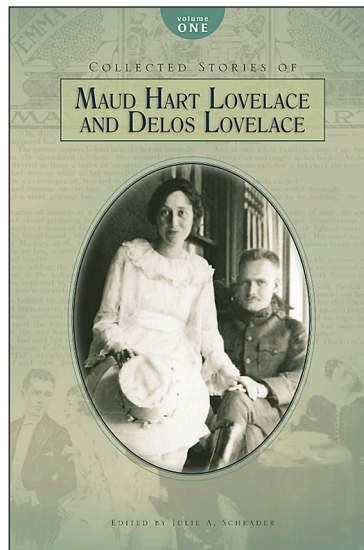
With Delos’s encouragement, Maud turned to historical fiction. Her first published novel was *The Black Angels* in 1926. The Lovelaces returned to New York in 1928 chiefly because Maud had business with a publisher and partly because Delos wanted to return to the newspaper business.

Not only did the couple collaborate on short stories, but they also wrote and published three books together: *Gentlemen From England*, *One Stayed at Welcome*, and *The Golden Wedge*. Maud found success with the Betsy-Tacy books starting in

1940. Delos worked with *The New York Sun* as assistant city editor, a columnist, a book reviewer, and even as the story writer for a comic strip.

“Plots are bounced about and ideas are bandied back and forth. They talk each other’s language. The story of Delos and Maude Lovelace has as many angles of the ‘perfect’ romance as they themselves would never dare dream up for one of their short stories or novels. No self-respecting editor would accept such stuff. It wouldn’t ring true to life.” (Nassau Daily Review-Star, 9/25/1941)

Volume One contains 12 short stories, some written by Maud herself and some together with Delos. There are many more Lovelace short stories, enough to fill several volumes. Stay tuned for Volume Two!



Winter in Deep Valley

By Julie A. Schrader

Winter in Deep Valley really begins with the first snowfall of the season, which is eagerly anticipated by children and adults alike. A fresh coat of white, glistening snow covers the otherwise brown, barren trees and lawns. The snow brightens our spirits as thoughts of winter fun await.



Illustration by Lois Lenski
© HarperPerennial Modern Classics

Maud Hart and Bick Kenney (Betsy and Tacy) enjoyed many of the typical turn of the century winter activities in Mankato (Deep Valley) including sledding, tobogganing, ice skating, sleigh rides and sleigh bells, and snow balls and snowmen.

Maud shares many delightful memories of a Deep Valley winter wonderland in the Betsy-Tacy books. Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown gives us a glimpse of what life in Mankato was like in 1904-05. The excitement of a child is evident when Betsy experiences the first snowfall in late November when she made her first expedition to the new Carnegie Library. "Gray clouds like battleships moved across a purplish sea of sky. It looked like snow."

Betsy left the library to have lunch at Bierbauer's Bakery and, "on her way back to the library she looked eagerly for snow." After lunch she returned to the library. "Betsy returned to her chair, took off her coat and hat, opened her book and forgot the world again. She looked up suddenly from "The Miraculous Pitcher" to see flakes coming past the window."

Maud writes in Chapter 9: "Snow loaded the bare arms of the maples, it lodged in the green crevices of firs, it threw sparkling shawls over the brown bushes shivering on Hill Street lawns...Men and boys shoveled "Indian trails" for the children to walk to school. Along with the scraping of shovels came the frosty tinkle of sleigh bells, as runners replaced wheels on the baker's wagon, cutters replaced carriages and buggies and farm wagons creaked into town on runners....Skates were sharpened; and down on the river,

snow was swept from the ice." Tacy's brother Paul made a giant snowman and Tib's brothers, Freddie and Hobbie, built an Ice Palace. Margaret and the Rivers children took out their sleds, "painted brightly with pictures of flowers, dogs and horses".

Betsy and Tacy thought they were now old enough to go bobsledding, like their sisters Julia and Katie and their friends, and Mr. and Mrs. Ray gave their approval. "Long, low and reckless, the bobsleds flew from the top of the Big Hill along a hard-packed frozen track in a thrilling sweep, almost to the slough." On the east, Lewis Street ended at the bottom of the "Big Hill". In 1904, Lewis Street went all the way to the slough to the west. It no longer extends this far, but in Maud's day Lewis Street went on for more than eight blocks!

Coasting at night was perfect when there was a bright moon. Everyone was wrapped stiff with clothing in coats, mittens, caps and hoods to keep warm. "Bright knitted scarfs called fascinators were stretched over their foreheads, crossed in the back and tied around their necks." Six people took their places on the bobsled, with one person to push off. Down they sped, the cold air slashing their faces. Down, down, down. Block after block. Almost to the slough...The run down was worth the climb back up with the snow crunching under their feet."

Bobsledding in these days was common in Mankato because of the many hills that provided perfect sledding or tobogganing runs. Older residents remember the tales of sledding down the steep Main Street hill.

The best part of enjoying the outdoors in the winter was coming inside to warm up. Betsy and her friends came inside to the sound of popcorn popping and they put "apples to roast on the back of the hard-coal heater". They played the piano, sang songs, and rolled up the rug for dancing in the dining room.

Winter certainly isn't all fun, especially when a blizzard threatens. Although Maud doesn't write about a winter blizzard in the Betsy-Tacy books, she did experience the blizzard of 1909. In January 1909, a blizzard isolated Mankato from the rest of the world, halting telephone service, telegraph and transportation services as rain and sleet gave way to wind-driven snow.

See 'Winter' page 11

The Betsy-Tacy Society and South Central College (SCC) teamed up to complete an exterior restoration project at Betsy's House this fall



Dr. Suzanne Nordblom, Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math at South Central College states, "this project is a great example of how South Central College (SCC) students and faculty can contribute to our community in tangible ways. In this case, students enrolled in Dr. Ryan Langemeier's Building Design and Energy Technology program were able to use their knowledge for a hands-on project to benefit the Betsy-Tacy Society."

Doug Laven, board member for the Betsy-Tacy Society, gave a lecture to the Building Design and Energy Technology students in advance of the project that explained safeguarding against lead handling and site preparation. Then, on October 8, SCC students joined other volunteers to remove loose paint and skillfully prepare the area for repainting.



Lincoln Park Fountain

– The Boy in Blue –

By Julie A. Schrader

Maud Hart Lovelace, Mankato's famous literary daughter, grew up several blocks from Lincoln Park. In an article written for the "I Remember Mankato" series published in the *Mankato Free Press* in 1952, Maud wrote, "As we grew older we made more trips downtown, pausing to play by the fountain at Lincoln Park or rest under the big elm there."

The park and the fountain were an important landmark in Maud's Deep Valley. Maud and her friends stopped to play there when they walked downtown. The Harts passed Lincoln Park every time they went downtown.

Maud mentions the little park and the fountain several times in the Betsy-Tacy books. "Lincoln Park was a pie-shaped wedge of lawn with a giant elm tree and a fountain on it."

"Lincoln Park came into sight, cool and green under its elm, the waters of its fountain sparkling."

"We'll go over to the Park," said Betsy, and you can wash up in the fountain." They ran across the street to Lincoln Park, and Tib washed her face and hands in the fountain. Betsy and Tacy picked a bouquet of clovers and pinned it over the chocolate spot on the front of her dress."

From *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*

After Betsy and Phil's break up in *Betsy In Spite of Herself*, Maud writes...

"She found herself at Lincoln Park, that pie-shaped piece of land with a big elm tree and a fountain on it, which stood where Broad Street met Hill. Instinctively, in her trouble, she had headed for Hill Street and Tacy. But she stopped at Lincoln Park. She washed her face and hands in the fountain and dried them on her handkerchief and sat down on a bench and looked up at the sky." Betsy works out the problem by herself, when she realizes, "'To thine own self be true!'" That's what I have to do if I'm going to get out and make something of myself... she had done her confiding to the stars in Lincoln Park."

Lincoln Park, the small triangular piece of land bordered by Broad, Lincoln and Grove Streets in Mankato, was made into a park in the mid-1880s. Wishing to perpetuate the memory of the honored dead of the Civil War, the Alexander Wilkin Post, Grand Army of the Republic



placed a bronze monument of a Civil War private soldier holding a musket at parade rest on a pedestal in the center of a stone basin. A dedication ceremony was held on Memorial Day, 1893 (Maud was a year old). The soldier's monument was called the Boy in Blue.

Sadly, the Boy in Blue did not remain on ac-

tive duty guarding his park very long. In 1894, vandals broke off the musket he was holding. This happened again in 1911, when the musket was completely broken, and the soldier's fingers were pried off the statue—making it vulnerable to damage from corrosion caused by moisture. A windstorm toppled the figure and it was not repaired. Exposure to the elements and neglect continued to take their toll. By 1922, citizens were asking for the fountain's removal. In 1927, that was done. A small granite monument was installed in 1935 to replace the statue and fountain, and remains there today.

Maud's grandfather, Solomon Palmer, was a Civil War veteran. Undoubtedly this monument brought back memories of her father to Stella Hart, memories she would share with her children, Kathleen, Maud and Helen. Maud wrote about Solomon Palmer in *Betsy's*

See 'Boy in Blue' page 9

Boy in Blue continued from page 8

Wedding, “They had discovered in the Ray’s basement an old drop-leaf table. Mrs. Ray’s father, when he came to Minnesota after the Civil War, had made it himself out of a black walnut tree...Joe and Betsy dragged it out in triumph.”

I’ve always wished the fountain was still in Lincoln Park and in 2011, along with local historian Bryce Stenzel, organized a committee to raise the funds to rebuild the “Boy in Blue”. To date we have raised \$30,000 of the \$100,000 needed. Construction on the stone pool base for the monument will begin in April! I can’t wait to sit by the fountain in Lincoln Park just as Maud did so many years ago.

This project is an ongoing, grassroots community effort. You can help return the Boy in Blue to active duty, guarding Mankato’s most historic neighborhood, during the sesquicentennial observance of America’s Civil War (2011-2015). For more information on how you can help, visit www.boyinblue.org and follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/BoyinBlueProject.

A Victorian Christmas

The Betsy-Tacy Society brought back the Victorian era during its Victorian Christmas celebration on the afternoons of December 1 and 8. In Tacy’s house, the gift shop was adorned with bows and ribbons; garlands decorated the ornament table, where ornaments sold for only 10 cents; and cookies and cocoa scented the dining room. In the center of the dining room, a large round table displayed beautiful gift baskets for sale created by the BTS board members and volunteers.

Betsy’s house had a cast of characters representing Betsy, Tacy, and Tib stringing popcorn for the Christmas tree in the sitting room. The chapter “Christmas Shopping” from *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown* and the Cheryl Harness-illustrated *The Night Before Christmas* were read by John Rezmerski and Jo Gangestad. On December 8 the Minnesota Valley Chorale sang carols to our guests in both houses.

It seemed only fitting that a fresh blanket of snow coated the ground outside where the 70 guests left their footprints. The Victorian Christmas Saturdays provided a memorable closure to 2012 for the Betsy-Tacy Society.

*Betsy-Tacy Society
Needs and Wants List**Betsy’s House*Kitchen

1. Wire egg basket
2. Wooden bread bowl
3. Wooden butter churn
4. Crockery
5. Wooden spoons and spatulas
6. Enamel Splatterware pans and dishpan
7. Wall-mount holder for wooden kitchen matches
8. Wall-mount holder for bar soap
9. Small wood box for stove wood
10. Small coffee grinder
11. Old handmade broom
12. Pictures for wall
13. Old baskets
14. Spice or dry ingredient tins
15. Kitchen jars
16. Small wooden butcher block on legs
17. Small wooden ice box

Dining Room

1. Telephone chair
2. Framed pictures for wall

Front Parlor

1. Ceramic lion
2. Small wall picture frames in which family photos can be hung
3. Fainting couch

Bedroom

1. Wooden washstand with towel bar on side
2. Framed pictures for wall

Tacy’s House

1. Heavy drapes for bedroom doorway
2. Violin on stand
3. Basket with darning and mending
4. Round table with leaves for the bay window

Other:

1. Small tools, devices from the late 1800s and early 1900s
2. Two hitching posts, used to tie a horse and buggy

Convention continued from page 1



niscing about the way it was when the Hart and Kenney families lived on Center Street. Some went up the Big Hill and others traveled to Murmuring Lake.

Back at the convention center we were inspired and entertained by impressive authors and guests. There were tables of treasures for bidding and buying. The program also included the BTS annual meeting, story-themed meals, a sing-along, book signings, and a costume parade. Laughter and conversations continued.

On Sunday morning when I waved good-bye to the crowd as they left Mankato, I was already looking forward to the next time we would be together. Many were headed to Lake Minnetonka, and some were headed to the airport.

I missed the Lake Minnetonka excursion, but Ruth McGregor wrote that this last event was her favorite one. She said “The odds were very high that I was riding on an actual streetcar boat on which Maud and Delos and Bick and Charles had sat.”

A group of women from various parts of the country demonstrated amazing generosity when they planned a convention to raise funds for BTS. Betsy-Tacy conventions feature dear friends who gather to celebrate friendships and literature. The friendships in Maud’s books have touched people’s lives for many years. I believe Maud would be humbled and proud to see friends still having a good time together in Deep Valley!

On behalf of the Betsy-Tacy Society I want to thank the committee members for their vision and hard work. I also want to thank the presenters, the Legacy Panel, and all the volunteers, donors, members, and guests from across the country. Your support has made a difference. We are truly grateful!



The Endowment Fund

At the BTS convention in July, we announced that we were working to establish an endowment fund. Susan Brown and Kathy Mork have been gathering information on what is needed to set up a formal endowment fund. Until now, all donations designated for the endowment fund have been tracked in our general savings account. With the generous donation of the Convention Committee, a separate sustaining fund savings account will be established, with the interest used to add to the account. We’ve taken the first step.

We are now creating an Endowment Committee to establish endowment fund policies and guidelines. We are

looking for BTS members who might be interested in serving on this committee. If you have a finance background, have been involved with an endowment committee, or have experience writing these policies, and you would like to volunteer, please contact Kathy Mork at klmork@yahoo.com. Your donations are also important to us in paying the day-to-day expenses of operating the houses. So until we increase our endowment fund to the point where it can generate income to cover those expenses, we still need your donations to our operating and restoration funds. We also ask that you remember the Betsy-Tacy Society endowment fund when doing your estate planning.

Winter continued from page 6

Reported in the January 29, 1909 issue of the *Free Press*: “wires and poles were snapped off by the weight of the ice that had formed on them and the wind blew a terrible gale. Ice particles beat pitilessly in the faces and eyes of all who were obliged to go out and snow drifts encumbered their feet.” Electric lights and streetlights were cut off to avoid accidents caused from touching or stepping on crossed wires. School closed, trains were delayed hours and rural route mail carriers did not go out in the fearful storm.

Many of the same winter activities are enjoyed today and will never get old. But with time comes change. We now have snowmobiles, snowblowers and indoor ice arenas. Can you imagine a bobsled coming down the middle of the street? Or hearing the jingle of sleigh bells and horses hooves on a snow filled street? You can almost feel the cold wind on your cheeks, hear the sleigh bells ring and smell the popcorn as you read *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown*.



(photo courtesy of the Blue Earth County Historical Society)

View of the 300 block of Mankato's South Front Street after the blizzard, January, 1909.

Betsy-Tacy Society receives grant

The Betsy-Tacy Society received a \$3,000 grant from the Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation. This grant will allow the society to acquire the needed items and supplies to properly display, archive and store their growing Lovelace collection. The grant will fund a new computer system, camera, MultiMedia & Digital Imaging for PastPerfect museum software, museum display cabinet, lighting and archival storage supplies. The grant was written and submitted by the BTS Archive Committee (Candy Laven, Julie Schrader, Lona Falenczykowski and Kelly Reuter).

The BTS archival collection consists of historical and personal items that belonged to the author Maud Hart Lovelace and her family. The collection also includes period household items and furniture displayed in the childhood homes of Maud Hart Lovelace and Frances 'Bick' Kenney (Betsy and Tacy houses). These houses were designated literary landmarks in 2010 and are furnished to the 1900 era when the author lived here and upon which the Betsy-Tacy series of books are based.



Elizabeth M. Riley
New York, NY

March 31, 1998

Michele Blake
North Easton, MA

My dear Michele,

In going over a bunch of old photographs with a godchild last week, I came on this wonderful picture of Maud at the party for Betsy's Wedding. The smiling person next to her is me, wearing a new hat which I bought in Boston at 0 (zero) Newbury Street to wear at that wonderful party.

Put this in your archive file and enjoy it.

Love,
Elizabeth



Illustration by Lois Lenski
© HarperPerennial Modern Classics

You are invited to...

Betsy's Birthday Party

Sat., April 27, 2013

1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Betsy & Tacy's House
333 & 332 Center Street in Mankato

Join us for the celebration of author Maud Hart Lovelace's 121st birthday! Maud was the character of "Betsy" in the Betsy-Tacy books and was born in Mankato on April 25, 1892.

- Costumed characters
- Old-fashioned birthday party games
- Tour Betsy and Tacy's houses
- Birthday cake and refreshments

Free to Betsy-Tacy Society members. All others: \$5 adults and \$2 children (6-16), ages 5 and under are free.

Announcing

Betsy-Tacy's Deep Valley

All things Maud Hart Lovelace,
Betsy-Tacy and Deep Valley

Written by Julie Schrader, this blog features stories and information about Maud, her books, her characters and Mankato (*Deep Valley*) history.

<http://betsytacysdeepvalley.wordpress.com/>



Illustration by Lois Lenski
© HarperPerennial Modern Classics

St. Peter homeowner recalls restoring of historic home after tornado

By Edie Schmierbach
Free Press Staff Writer
The Mankato Free Press
Fri Mar 29, 2013

ST PETER – Judy Ahlstrom recently placed on the market her Victorian-era house and she’s begun preparing to move.

For three decades, the brick Queen Anne on North Third Street has been her home. Being in the same place for a long time does not mean Ahlstrom or the house, which was built in 1887-88, have never faced the winds of change.

Together, they made it through an F3 tornado that blew through town 15 years ago today.

The intense twister was one of several spawned by a supercell thunderstorm that formed in southeastern South Dakota and rushed through several counties in Minnesota. Winds with speeds up to 200 mph struck the campus of Gustavus Adolphus College and did not break stride as they roared downhill, sweeping several houses aside before ripping off the roof of the historic structure at 202 N. Third St.

Ahlstrom recalled being in the basement March 29, 1998, with her husband, Mark, and their son, Aaron, as the storm raged above. Their daughter, Hilary, was in Mankato on that late Sunday afternoon.

When the Ahlstroms came back upstairs, they found the south-facing kitchen and adjoining dining room were intact. “It’s not so bad,” they assured each other.

Then they ventured a bit farther into the home and realized the extent of the damage. “The roof had been sucked off,” Judy Ahlstrom said.

And there was more. During the storm a car bumper had been lodged into the woodwork of a downstairs room. Windows were blown out, an antique chandelier lost its crystal sun catchers, and a favorite light fixture was perpendicular to the way it had been installed its “Vaseline” glass lamp intact. The wood coat/hat rack part of the home’s original furniture was found mirror face down in the hallway, but



still in one piece. Remnants of pink insulation were strewn throughout the downstairs rooms.

Mark Ahlstrom loved the house. “He carried a picture of it in his wallet,” Judy Ahlstrom said. So as they looked up to the sky as they shivered in their home, they didn’t consider leaving or demolishing it, Judy Ahlstrom said.

Her husband just turned to her and said, “Let’s go find Ron Goodrich. We wanted to beat the rush.”

Mark Ahlstrom who “was quite a handyman himself” respected the Mankato construction company owner’s reputation for restoring historic buildings.

Goodrich agreed to send over people from a restoration project at the nearby Cox House. Soon, workers had rigged a temporary cover to keep out rain, then they began the top-to-bottom restoration.

The Ahlstroms stayed with friends temporarily but soon went home to an adapted lifestyle that included a Goodrich crew and its numerous projects.

Workers arrived as early as 5 a.m. and climbed ladders to get to work in the attic. Sometimes at the end of the day, they joined the Ahlstroms for cocktails. Occasionally, the crew prepared barbecue in the backyard.

“They became like part of our family,” Judy Ahlstrom said. Randy Dinsmore was one of the regulars he coordinated the yearlong project.

Fourteen years after the job was finished, Dinsmore’s love for the architecture of the old house still shows.

“It was a rare opportunity we almost never get to have,” said Dinsmore, who has years of experience in remodeling and restoration.

See ‘Tornado’ page 14

Tornado continued from page 13

“I find it more interesting to find solutions to existing problems,” he said. “Most of the time, we have the original pieces. We look at them to determine whether they should be replaced or restored. In the case of the Ahlstroms’ house, lots of the pieces were just plain missing.”

Dinsmore winced when remembering how well-meaning volunteers discarded a pile of damaged but valuable pieces of wood, the remnants of the home’s ornate front porch.

“It (the project) was a challenge. We restored what was there and the rest we rebuilt.”

Matching brick was salvaged from destroyed downtown buildings.

The blueprints had been put in a safety-deposit box away from the house. Having access to those plans made Dinsmore’s job easier. The crew created shop drawings using old photographs to make copies of gables, carved grapevine designs and scalloped arches.

The collapsed roof was replaced with a new support design that transferred the weight load more efficiently and strengthened the structure.

The Ahlstroms also had the Minnesota Historical Society on hand to help with the restoration of their home, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Emily and Stephen Schumacher House.

When contacting the BTS....

By Mail – Always send mail to the following address:
Betsy-Tacy Society
P.O. Box 94
Mankato, MN 56002-0094

Do not use the address printed in the back of the older issues of the Betsy-Tacy books and do not address mail to us at the Center Street location. We do not have a mailbox at either house, and the mail carrier cannot deliver to these addresses.

By E-mail – When sending an e-mail, ALWAYS use “Betsy-Tacy” in the subject line. This will help ensure your message does not get caught in spam filters.

By Phone – Our phone number (507) 345-9777 – reaches an answering service. Please leave your message and it will be returned by someone with the society who can best help you.

The Historical Society provided funding, part of which the Ahlstroms used to replace copper on the home’s exterior. They also purchased wallpaper with patterns that were in style during the Victorian era.

Judy Ahlstrom proudly displays three plaques on a bookshelf in her study, all citing her family’s efforts in respecting their home’s history. The honors include a 1999 Preservation Alliance of Minnesota Award. (The city of St. Peter received the same award that year.)

The restored home has been featured on HGTV.

On the front porch of the home, another plaque is displayed. It is a tribute to Mark Ahlstrom, who died in 1999. He had been diagnosed with lung cancer a few weeks before the tornado struck St. Peter.

The simply designed plaque from the construction company’s owner is a tribute to Mark Ahlstrom. It reads: “For the love of nostalgia.”

Judy Ahlstrom knows critics may question the expense or the wisdom of living in a old house that could pass for a museum.

“It’s not for everyone, I know. I feel it’s really important for someone to step up to the plate and preserve places like this.”

BTS NOTE: The Schumacher House is a beautiful Victorian Queen Anne style house, designed and built by H. C. Gerlach, father of Marjorie Gerlach (Tib). Gerlach’s handwritten notes of the specifications and blueprints were found in the walls of the house after it was damaged by the 1998 tornado.

*Happy 121st
Birthday Maud!*



New Members

Every new member receives a new member packet that includes the most recent newsletter, a history of the BTS, a Maud Hart Lovelace timeline, and much more. With each new paid lifetime membership you'll receive a hardcover copy of *Winona's Pony Cart*, a Betsy's House ornament, and a lifetime membership certificate.

As a member of the Betsy-Tacy Society you will:

- Be kept abreast of developments with the society and its outreach.
- Have access to the "Members Only" page on the BTS website, where society archives are available.
- Be an integral part of the BTS mission to preserve the Betsy-Tacy houses, which are historical literary landmarks.
- Help BTS reach a new generation of readers as it introduces the timeless works of Maud Hart Lovelace.
- Be a part of the movement that values history and appreciates literature.

Great Gift Idea . . .

Membership to the Betsy-Tacy Society makes a great gift for that special person on your gift list. With each paid gift membership, we'll send a new-member packet and sign your name to a special card announcing your gift. Just fill out the membership form at right with the recipient's name and mailing address and tell us how to sign your card.



Privacy Statement

The Betsy-Tacy Society is committed to respecting privacy of our members. Please be assured that we do not rent or sell our mailing list. If you have any questions about your member information and how it is used, please contact us at membership@betsy-tacy-society.org or (507) 345-9777.

Address Changes

Please remember to inform us if your mailing address or e-mail address changes. Most of our mailings are sent via bulk mail to save on postage costs and keep membership rates low. Bulk mail is NOT forwarded even when a change-of-address card is left with the post office.

Betsy-Tacy Society Annual Membership Form

Name _____

Business Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

New Renewal

I would like: Mailed Newsletters
 Electronic Newsletters

Choose electronic newsletter – save money for the BTS and save a tree!

Membership Levels

- \$25 Basic (*Foreign members receive electronic newsletters – if mailed are preferred move up to the next level.*)
- \$50 Patron
- \$100 Silver*
- \$250 Gold* (Gift A or B - circle one)
- \$500 Lifetime (Gifts A and C)
 - Pay in 4 installments of \$125
- Please do not send my gift. I want my full contribution to support the BTS.

GIFTS

- Gift A: *Winona's Pony Cart* – hardcover
- Gift B: Immortal Trio notecards
- Gift C: Betsy's House ornament

Donations

I would like to make a tax-deductible gift of \$ _____ above my yearly membership dues.

I would like to allocate my gift to:

- Unrestricted
- General Fund
- Restoration Fund
- Assessment FUnd
- No acknowledgement for donation required
- Donation in Memory of: _____

Donation in Honor of: _____

Membership dues and monetary gifts cover a growing part of the BTS annual operating budget. Thank you for your support as the BTS preserves and promotes the legacy of Maud Hart Lovelace.

Please return this form to:
 BTS Membership
 P.O. Box 94, Mankato, MN 56002-0094



Betsy-Tacy Society
P.O. Box 94
Mankato, MN 56002-0094
www.betsy-tacysociety.org

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Give to the Max

November 15 is Give to the Max Day in Minnesota, when nonprofits across the state encourage their donors to contribute through GiveMN.org. Thanks to the generosity of BTS members and supporters, we received a check for \$2,920.89 representing donations from over 60 donors. That's an average of \$50 per donor – amazing! Special thanks to Laurie Pengra, who agreed to match up to \$1,000 in donations, making our total income from the event \$3,920.89!

Visit the Betsy-Tacy Society website

Current and back issues of the *Deep Valley Sun* and other special features are available on the BTS website: There also are plenty of resources for parents, librarians and teachers interested in learning more about Maud Hart Lovelace and the Betsy-Tacy books.

Plus, check out our online shop; your purchases support our missions!

www.betsy-tacysociety.org

Membership Information

As your membership expires, you'll receive an e-mail reminder to renew. Please renew promptly to save the BTS staff time and postage for sending renewal notices via USPS. You can renew online at www.betsy-tacysociety.org/membershippurchase.

The BTS is very grateful to all its members for their ongoing support.



Find us on
Facebook

Did you know you don't have to be a member of Facebook to view the Betsy-Tacy Society Facebook page? The BTS now boasts more than 1,750 Facebook fans! Stay current on BTS events or simply join in the conversation. It's fun!

www.facebook.com/BetsyTacy