Happy birthday

TO MAUD,
FROM MAUD

Maud Hixon performs in Mankato Sunday as part of the celebration of Maud Hart Lovelace’s 125th birthday. Lovelace was the author of the Betsy-Tacy children’s books. The books are set in the fictional town of Deep Valley, which is based on early 20th century Mankato.

Artist and guest will perform songs from album commissioned by Betsy-Tacy Society

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Few things are as uniquely “Mankatoan” as the Betsy-Tacy series of children’s books. Written by Maud Hart Lovelace, the books are cherished by thousands and bring tourists to town every year to see the places depicted in Deep Valley, the fictional town that bears a striking resemblance in many ways to Mankato.

The books worm their way into your heart. Sometimes the memories become so fond that people name their children after the author. Such is the case with Twin Cities jazz songstress Maud Hixon. Her mother was a fan of the books, she said, and decided the name of her favorite author was a pretty good name for her daughter.

Hixon comes to town fairly often, and she’ll be here again Sunday to perform with her husband, Rick Carlson, and soprano Maria Jette in a concert of tunes from Hixon’s album, Listening For Your Song: A Musical Companion to the Betsy-Tacy

If you go
What: Maud Hixon with Rick Carlson and Maria Jette
Where: 2 p.m. Sunday
Where: St. John’s Episcopal Church, 302 Warren Street, Mankato
Tickets: $15 — Seating is limited and advance tickets are requested. Tickets available online at www.betsy-tacy-society.org/product/maud-hixon-concert-ticket/, email BTHSMankato@gmail.com, or call 507-944-6772.

Come to Betsy’s Birthday Party!
The Betsy-Tacy Society is throwing a birthday party to celebrate the 125th birthday of Maud Hart Lovelace, the author of the children’s book series.

Lovelace was born in Mankato April 25, 1892. In the Betsy-Tacy books, the main character, Betsy Ray, is based on Lovelace.

The birthday party event, which begins 1 p.m. Saturday at Tacy’s House, 332 Center Street in Mankato, has an $18 admission fee. There will be cupcake decorating, old-fashioned games and story time.

“Take a mini-tour of Betsy’s house,” the event announcement says, “and have some girl talk in Betsy’s bedroom.”

Email BTHSMankato@gmail.com for more information about this event, or visit betsy-tacy-society.org.

familiar faces? Or is it a room full of strangers every time?
Maud Hixon: Some of each. The venues each draw a different audience, it seems, and they’re all so welcoming.

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FP: Talk a little bit about your relationship with your namesake, Maud Hart Lovelace. How big of an impact did her work have on your childhood?

MH: I discovered her books when I was 7, and I have re-read the Betsy-Tacy series many times since then. They have come to feel like family scrapbooks to me in a way as they allow me to revisit my own childhood landscape of the imagination.

FP: What can people expect from your show this week?

MH: The show will include all the music found on the recording “Listening For Your Song,” which was commissioned by the Betsy-Tacy Society in Mankato last year and consists of songs referred to in the Betsy-Tacy series. We are very fortunate to have singer Maria Jette joining us to perform several selections as well. She and I sing “The Cat Duet” together on the album.

FP: How long have you been coming to Mankato to perform?

MH: Since 2004, I think. One of my first concerts ever was for Minnesota State University.

FP: Do you have a favorite Betsy-Tacy book?

MH: “Betsy and the Great World.” I love taking an armchair trip to Europe with this beloved character in 1914.

FP: If you could give Maud Hart Lovelace a birthday present, what would it be?

A bouquet of wildflowers picked on the Big Hill. She always gave the names of all the flowers and trees in her books, and enhanced our appreciation of the natural beauty in Mankato.

FP: What’s the best birthday present you’ve ever gotten?

MH: Books!