DEEP VALLEY SUN

Vol. 14, Issue 3 • Fall 2021

20 YEARS OF HOME OWNERSHIP!

The BTS purchased Tacy's House in July 1995, but we have owned both homes now for exactly 20 years! Betsy's House was saved from demolition when the BTS purchased it for $60,000 in 2001. Wrote then-President Lona Falenczykowski in Betsy-Tacy Society *Journal No. 29* (2000-2001), "Someday we hope to have a house museum where we can display all of our wonderful items." After seeking donations for close to a decade, with great fanfare we announced that our goal of "burning the mortgage" was achieved in April 2009. Please join us in celebrating this platinum anniversary!

BETSY-TACY IS EVERYWHERE

by Pam DeMarce

You just never know when you are going to have a Betsy-Tacy moment. I had one this past July while attending a Civitan International Convention in Jacksonville, Florida. At one of the breakout sessions, I mentioned that I was from Mankato, Minnesota. Shortly after that, a woman slipped into the chair next to me and introduced herself as Bonnie Ruth of Saint Petersburg, Florida. She said, "Do you know about the Betsy-Tacy homes and the book *Winona's Pony Cart* by Maud Hart Lovelace? Winona's character was based on my grandmother, Beulah Hunt."

This was such a great connection and the start of what I hope will be a long-time friendship. Since our initial meeting in Florida, Bonnie and I have been emailing information back and forth. In future newsletters, we will feature some of the wonderful history that Bonnie is sharing with us. Among other things, we've learned that *Winona's Pony Cart* was dedicated to the grandchildren of Beulah and her sister Marion—including Bonnie!

Bonnie says that the last time she and husband Dave visited Mankato, they did not get a chance to see the Betsy-Tacy Houses, but she has pictures of herself outside each of them. We look forward to welcoming them back to Deep Valley very soon.

Bonnie and Pam—a serendipitous meeting!

In this issue:

- Introducing Our New Staff Members, p. 3
- New Gift Shop Items, p. 3
- Meet Sophie von Haselberg, p. 4
- The Moulin Rouge House Bed-and-Breakfast, p. 6
- A Very Betsy Birthday Party, p. 8
- Trivia Quiz, p. 10
- Lemon Layer-Cake Recipe, p. 12
- What *Is* That?, p. 13
- Remembering David Allan, p. 14

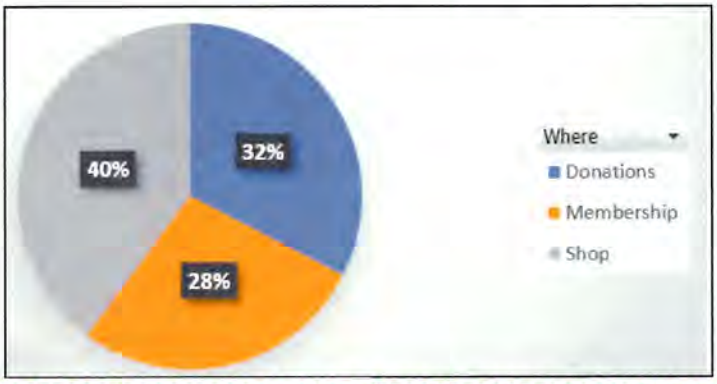
A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I grew up in a small community 30 miles south of Mankato, and I've been in the community since coming to college here in the mid-'70s. Although I'm very involved in the Mankato community, I knew little about the Betsy-Tacy Society—and I wanted to know more. In December 2020 I joined the BTS Board of Advisors, and I took on the role of Board President in June.

I've been so impressed by the people who over 20 years ago had the vision to carry on and promote Maud Hart Lovelace's stories of "Deep Valley" and her emphasis on the value of friendships. Betsy, Tacy, and Tib remind me of the friendship between me, my twin sister, Pat, and two other neighborhood girls, LaRue and Carol. When we were young, the four of us were **always** together. Even though life took all of us in different directions, when we got together it was just like those early days again.

This past year we lost LaRue, at the young age of 66, after complications from heart surgery. She was a great daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother. A couple of months ago I purchased a paver that will be placed in the brick walkway at Betsy's House, alongside hundreds of pavers purchased by members and friends of the Society. This paver is in LaRue's memory. It reads: "LaRue, Carol, Pat and Pam; Friends Forever." I am happy to have a place where the three of us can come together to share our memories of LaRue—and I'm happy knowing that our friendship is marked by this paver, which helps fund the vision of our founders to keep the Maud Hart Lovelace tradition alive!

—Pam DeMarce, BTS President



A MESSAGE FROM THE TREASURER

Summer greetings from Betsy-Tacy land!

On behalf of the Betsy-Tacy Society, we thank our supporters for your continual involvement in our activities throughout the first half of 2021. With your support, we have already brought in almost $20,000 in this period. Of that income, 32% is from donations, 40% is from shop sales, and 28% is from memberships, both new and renewals.

We are so grateful for your support as we move through a number of new activities coming in the second half of 2021, including a website reboot, a shop reorganization, and a number of new shop products. Stay tuned in the next few months, as our two new employees and cadre of interns prepare all this and more. Thanks, as always, to our tireless volunteers, without whom none of this activity would be possible. We are always looking for new volunteers, especially in the Mankato area! If you are interested in volunteering, please email our new Operations Manager, Diane Langland: diane@betsy-tacysociety.org

—Emily Scott, BTS Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS

Pam DeMarce, President
Lona Falenczykowski, Vice President
Emily Falenczykowski-Scott, Treasurer
Candy Laven, Secretary
Michele Blake
Jameel Haque
Amber Massaglia

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Libby Abdo
Jennifer Davis-Kay
Maud Hixson
Michelle May
Betsy Sherman
Shandy Weimert

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Diane Langland, Operations Manager, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Betsy-Tacy Society— Diane is eager for the time we can welcome visitors to the houses again. It is so fun to hear visitor's stories of their love for Betsy-Tacy. Says Diane, "I am a longtime Minnesotan, new to Mankato , and I just bought a house! It's easy to love Mankato, with its rich history and vibrant community. When my three children were young, my mother-in-law introduced us to the Betsy-Tacy series. I am so excited to work within the community of BTS folks—you know they are the best around!"

Jennifer Davis-Kay is stepping off the BTS Board to serve as Communications Coordinator. She will continue to oversee our four newsletters (including a new e-blast for YA members) and other communications. She also actively works to build and engage our growing membership. Jennifer lives in New England with her husband and two children but lately has been drooling over Deep Valley real estate . . .

NEW ITEMS IN THE BTS GIFT SHOP

The Betsy-Tacy Society has been working with talented designer Kate Gabrielle to create enamel pins and vinyl die-cut stickers featuring iconic items from our favorite books. Kate's designs are so fresh and fun and whimsical—and we are thrilled to offer some new products.

The pins are approximately 1" x 1.5" and made from soft enamel and iron metal. They feature the Okto Delta symbol (the girls' ill-fated sorority in *Betsy Was a Junior*), an iconic quote from *Emily of Deep Valley*, and a spray of forget-me-nots (as Betsy requested for her wedding bouquet).

Though the designs are quite different, each has an antique gold metal plating, giving the set a cohesive look. The pins are $10 apiece, and the set of three is $24.

The stickers are approximately 2" x 2.5". Removable (though not reusable), they are wonderful for decorating a notebook, water bottle, computer case . . . any common item that can use a little la-di-da! The designs feature a spray of rosy apple blossoms (take that, Mr. Gaston!), Betsy and Tacy's most beautiful jar of colored sand, a quote from the fifth birthday party that started it all, a bottle of Jockey Club perfume, Betsy's sophomore-year journal, Betsy's Merry Widow hat, the iconic quote from *Emily of Deep Valley* (yes, it's a pin *and* a sticker!), a Ouija board (is there T-R-O-U-B-L-E ahead?!), and the S.S. Columbic en route to Munich. Each sticker is $2.50, and the set of nine is $18.

All items may be ordered from the BTS Gift Shop. Happy shopping!

MEET SOPHIE VON HASELBERG

Interview by Michelle May

EDITOR'S NOTE: We've always been proud to count Bette Midler as an ardent fan of the books, and when we discovered that her daughter had a podcast, we got to wondering if she loved the books as well—so we asked! Sophie is a pure delight, and we are so excited to get to know another friend of Betsy Ray's. BTS Advisory Council member Michelle May interviewed Sophie for the Summer E-Blast. By popular demand, we're rerunning the article here. Enjoy!

Michelle: Can you give us a bit of an overview of your history with the Betsy-Tacy books—what are your memories of them as a child, have you reread them much as an adult, have you read all of them including *Carney and Emily,* which book is your favorite, etc.?

Sophie: I have vivid memories of reading the Betsy-Tacy books when I was a child. I used to pore over the illustrations and imagine myself living in the chocolate-colored house. I've just rediscovered them—to answer these questions, I went back and read *Betsy-Tacy*, and it's just as wonderful as I remember!

Michelle: Which character do you identify with most?

Sophie: While I still envy Tacy's perfect red ringlets, I feel most closely aligned with Betsy because she's always cooking up stories and taking her imagination on wild rides. And since I'm an actor, playing make-believe is still very much a part of my life!

Michelle: Do you have a lifelong best friend, a Tacy?

Sophie: I do! I met my best friend, Rebecca, when we were 2, when we showed up to preschool wearing the same dress. Since we live in different cities now, we try to go on trips to far-flung places together once a year.

Michelle: You host a podcast about dinner parties [called *Having A Night*]—do you have any great ideas for a Betsy-Tacy-themed party?

Sophie: Ooh, I love this question! Well, when rereading BT, I was struck by how often they talk about food—which is probably part of why I loved the books so much when I was a kid. Of course you could do a picnic, like the ones they take up to the Big Hill. Pack a beautiful picnic basket with a bunch of little sandwiches and cakes? What a dream! Or, because Tib is German, you could do a German feast and serve sauerkraut and sausages with really spicy mustard, with a nice creamy cucumber salad . . . I'm getting hungry!

Michelle: You're acting and producing now—do you think a Betsy-Tacy movie or TV miniseries could be done well? Who would you pick to play some of the roles? Some of us like the idea of a Greta Gerwig *Little Women*-type movie, but some of us hate the idea of seeing the books onscreen . . .

Sophie: I think a Betsy-Tacy movie or series could be wonderful! It was such a different time; I would love to see the innocence of the books play out onscreen.

Michelle: Your mother just wrote a new children's book—have you thought about being an author? Was that part of Betsy's appeal when you were young, her being a writer?

Sophie: When I was a kid, I always said that when I grew up I'd be—in my words at the time—"a writer slash actress," so I'm sure Betsy being a writer was part of the appeal of the stories. During COVID, I've

gotten back into writing, which has been such a joy. Getting to dive into my own imagination—even if my stories are absolutely awful!—has felt like a rediscovery.

Michelle: Is there any one scene from the books that sticks with you most?

Sophie: Rereading *Betsy-Tacy*, I couldn't believe how familiar so much of it was to me. The illustrations had really stuck with me—I felt like I was revisiting old friends! In particular, I remembered the chocolate-colored house and the picnics on the hill. And the idea of having some small space carved out for myself and my friends! I may have to find an old piano box somewhere . . .

Michelle: Have you ever been to Minnesota? Do you think it would spoil your vision of Deep Valley if you were in the real-life Mankato and it wasn't like you pictured?

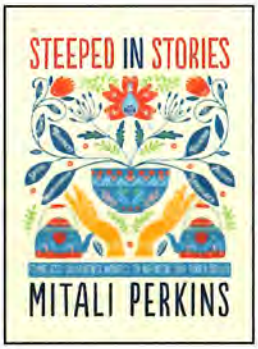
Sophie: I've been to Minnesota but never to Mankato. I am so enamored by the world Maud Hart Lovelace creates—I'd love to visit the real-life version. Of course, no place ever lives up to one's imagination, but who knows—Mankato just might!

The BTS recently sent Sophie a map of Betsy-Tacy sites in Deep Valley (also available on our website). We hope she'll visit soon and often!

The Tale of the Mandarin Duck

Sophie's mom (Bette Midler) has just published a book titled *The Tale of the Mandarin Duck: A Modern Fable*. Ms. Midler has always been a wonderful ambassador for our beloved books, and we are thrilled to learn that BT fandom runs in the family!

Recent visitor Marci Nelson gifted us with the April 1916 issue of *Little Folks* magazine for children, in which we found the above advertisement. Do you think Bobbie Sibley's coveted baseball uniform (in *Carney's House Party*) looked something like this?



New Book Features *Emily of Deep Valley*

"Reconnecting with these stories from childhood isn't merely nostalgia. In an era of uncertainty and despair, they lighten our load and bring us much-needed hope."

Mitali Perkins' latest book—*Steeped in Stories: Timeless Children's Novels to Refresh Our Tired Souls*—considers a timely question: Can you love a classic novel from childhood and also acknowledge its flaws? Betsy-Tacy fans will especially enjoy "Chapter 5: Despair and Hope: *Emily of Deep Valley* by Maud Hart Lovelace."

Steeped in Stories is available from all major booksellers. You can also order a signed copy directly from Broadleaf Books.

Time to renew? Please check your mailing label, which now includes the date that your BTS membership will expire.

THE MOULIN ROUGE HOUSE BED-AND-BREAKFAST

by Julia A. Nephew

You will step into the world of Deep Valley's Belle Époque when you enter The Moulin Rouge House in Mankato's Lincoln Park neighborhood (811 S. 2nd Street). This newly opened bed-and-breakfast creates the perfect atmosphere for a visit to the Betsy-Tacy Houses, just a few blocks away. My daughter Sophia gave an apt description when she declared that it is "like walking through a Thorne Miniature Room" (at the Art Institute of Chicago, not far from our home in Glen Ellyn).

Front parlor with the World's Fair bow window facing 2nd Street

New owners Kristin Fisher and Chris Crowell have lovingly restored what they (and many locals) still call "the Lewis and Lizzie Hunt House." The Hunts were the uncle and aunt of Beulah Hunt ("Winona Root" in the early Betsy-Tacy books), who purchased the house in 1886. Lizzie Hunt was the architect and contractor for this house and several more in the neighborhood, including Beulah's own house at 102 E. Pleasant Street. The Hunts lived here until 1908. Ownership of the home changed hands a few times over the years. In 1941 it was purchased by Henry and Betty Webb, and the house remained in their family for the next 75 years. Betty (and later her daughter, Cecelia) ran the Moulin Rouge Beauty Shop on the main floor of the house, a 60-year business that is still fondly remembered by area residents. Kristin and Chris purchased the house in 2018 with the idea of restoring it with period furnishings and turning it into a bed-and-breakfast.

Moulin Rouge House

Spiral staircase inside the turret

Looking into the dining room from the front parlor

This Queen Anne-style house offers three rooms for rent, each with its own modern bathroom. The World's Fair Room is at the top of a spiral staircase, above the famous bow window. Next to it is the Free Press Room, named for the Mankato newspaper co-owned by Lewis Hunt (Beulah/Winona's uncle; her father was the other owner). The Moulin Rouge Suite has a large bedroom and a sitting room with a Murphy bed. Its claw-foot bathtub is right out of *Betsy and the Great World*! Every room is exquisitely decorated with period furniture and DreamCloud hybrid mattresses. The sheets and pillows are divinely soft. I felt like I was riding with Betsy and Tacy on their feather, up in the clouds.

The house was built in 1886, and the large front bow window was added in 1893. It was purchased by the Hunts from the dismantled French Pavilion of the Columbian Exposition at the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. A *Mankato Free Press* article describes how the window arrived by train and a crowd of townspeople followed it to the house. Chris Crowell described to us how nerve-racking it was to safely remove the large panes of glass in order to replace the rotted wood of the window. When you stand inside at the window, the 180° view of 2nd Street is exceptional.

My twin daughters, Madeleine and Sophia, and I stayed at the Moulin Rouge House for three days in July 2021. Sophia loved to stand in the dining room, looking toward the front parlor, foyer, and spiral staircase. She said that it reminds her of how when you look into the Thorne Miniature Rooms, you can peek into other rooms through the doorways. At the Moulin Rouge, those rooms include the World's Fair window and the unique spiral staircase that fills the turret. It is easy to see why Maud added a similar tower to Tib's house.

Kristin and Chris are wonderful hosts. They love to give tours of the unique house and recount for visitors the history of its former owners. There is a chair in the breakfast nook room by one of the many fireplaces where you can peruse historical documents and recent publications about the restoration.

The Moulin Rouge House is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It opened on June 1, 2021, offering guests comfortable beds and a delicious four-course breakfast. Learn more about this historic home at www.moulinrougehouse.com. To book a room, visit the website, email info@moulinrougehouse.com, or call 507/519-3400.

My daughters and I spent two days touring the area: Betsy and Tacy's Center Street Houses, Minneopa Falls, Rapidan Dam, Saint Peter ("St. John" in the books, Deep Valley's football rival), the Blue Earth County Library Maud Hart Lovelace Children's Wing, and Glenwood Cemetery. The girls had such a grand time, they've requested an annual pilgrimage to Mankato—staying at the Moulin Rouge House, of course!

My favorite time was our last morning, when I took an early walk alone around the Lincoln Park Neighborhood. After many, many wonderfully busy visits to Mankato over the years, on this walk I was able to take time to immerse myself in the Deep Valley of my imagination. I walked past Mrs. Chubbock's Store, Tib's house, and the houses of other people who were portrayed as characters in the books. I walked up Lewis Street to Tacy's and then Betsy's House as the sun came up over the Big Hill. Sitting on the bench, I experienced a window into the peace and quiet and loving friendship that those two little girls shared when they brought their dinners outside and gazed at the world as they knew it. Moments like this are priceless.

Source: Tim Pulis, "If These Walls Could Talk," *The Blue Earth County Historian*, Fall 2019.

JULIA A. NEPHEW is a Children's Librarian who lives in Glen Ellyn (a western suburb of Chicago) with her husband and twin daughters. Like Deep Valley, Glen Ellyn has tree-lined residential streets, with names such as Hill, Pleasant, and Maple, and many beautifully restored Victorian homes and parks. Julia has been an elected commissioner of the Glen Ellyn Park District for more than 12 years.

A VERY BETSY BIRTHDAY PARTY

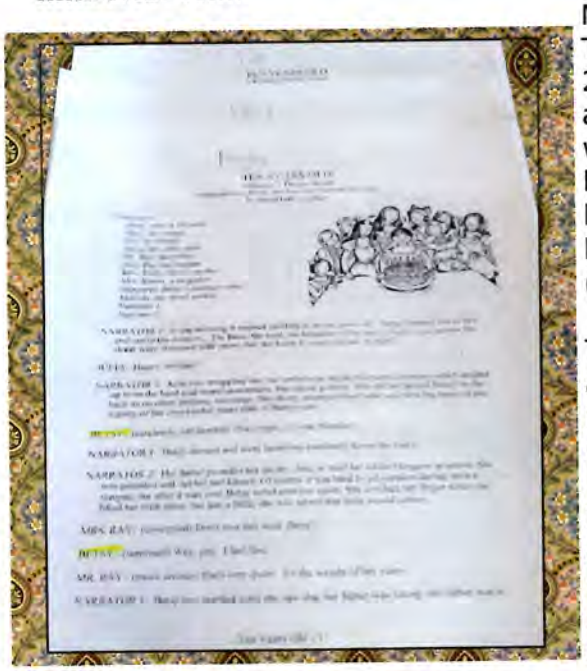
by Kitty Carr Harmon

Back in the mists of the mid-1960s, when I was in eighth grade, my mother gave me a copy of *Heaven to Betsy* for Christmas. I **devoured** it and then eagerly consumed the rest of the Betsy books. My cousin Nancy and I, only two weeks apart in age, discussed them endlessly. (Along with boys, her annoying younger sister, current trends in popular music—I had a huge crush on Peter Noone of Herman's Hermits—and boys.)

Many years have passed. Nancy and I both still love Betsy and for a time were active on Maud-L [a Betsy-Tacy-focused e-list]. We have made pilgrimages to Minnesota, though sadly not together. She was blessed with two sons and three grandsons. I had one son, and then, miracle of miracles, a GRANDDAUGHTER! (Now I have two.) I started reading *Betsy-Tacy* to Bonnie when she was five. She **loved** the stories. We've read all the way to *Carney's House Party*. She loves to hear about her namesake Bonnie Andrews, Carney's best friend. When it came time to celebrate her all-important 10th birthday, Bonnie decided that **of course** it had to be a Betsy party—because how often do you start having two numbers in your age?

Bonnie wanted her birthday cake to be the lemon-filled layer cake mentioned in *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*. I made it, using the recipe in *Beyond Domestic Science: Recipes from Betsy-Tacy* [see page 12 of this newsletter], and Bonnie decorated it herself. We also served croissants filled with ham and cheese or chicken salad, fruit kabobs, and killer homemade strawberry lemonade.

I found a Reader's Theater script titled "Ten Years Old" on the BTS website [under Newsletter Archive], and Bonnie wrote an introduction for those party participants unlucky enough to be unfamiliar with the Immortal Trio:



Many years ago, three inseparable friends longed to be 10. They thought they would be very grown up when they had 2 numbers in their age. Betsy, the heart of the group, was a hazel eyed, perky faced aspiring writer. Tacy was shy, with long bright red curls, and her face would turn red as her curls when she got embarrassed. Tib was tiny. She looked young for her age and had bright yellow fluffy doll like curls. But she was really the practical one of the trio. (Betsy's brown hair was straight.)

They were very adventurous, and did such things as write a letter to the King of Spain and offer to have Tib marry him. Their big sisters were nice but at times they found each other rather annoying.

I love the Betsy books because they are kids just like me and they have adventures like I would like to have. They have a big hill just like I do. Follow in their footsteps today and enjoy some of the things they would have experienced so long ago.

We played Hide the Thimble and Go Fish and had a piñata. Bonnie also came up with a couple of original games:

Pin the Bows on Betsy: Like Pin the Tail on the Donkey, the goal is to stick two hair bows on Betsy (Bonnie drew the picture of Betsy, using the Lois Lenski illustration in *Big Hill* as a guide.)

Winona's Ticket: In the story, the girls' friend Winona was always getting free tickets to plays because her father was the newspaper editor. One day she got four tickets to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Every child in school wanted them, and Betsy, Tacy, and Tib tried everything they could think of to get her to give them tickets—even hypnosis! In this game, all the kids stand in a circle. I'll think of a number between one and a hundred. Everybody guesses, and the one closest goes into the middle to be Winona. Everybody takes turns trying to make Winona laugh in 15 seconds. The first four to make her laugh get a ticket and a prize!

Between decorations, refreshments, games, prizes, hand-washed china, and so forth, the party was a tremendous amount of work for me, my long-suffering husband, and Bonnie's mom. Even my son pitched in! My cat, in contrast, expressed his opinion of the strange people invading his territory, the comings and goings, the giggles and screams, by throwing up on my bed. (And my tablet.) But it was worth it. Because, this:

KITTY HARMON has been hooked on Betsy-Tacy since her 13th birthday. Besides Betsy and her granddaughters, her passions are reading, singing, baking, and sewing (not always successfully . . .). She is a retired university counselor and currently teaches English online to students from around the world.

A NEW RESOURCE ON THE BTS WEBSITE

A recent trend in children's literature is to examine classic stories for stereotypes and cultural messages that, given today's standards and social mores, are now considered offensive. We touched on this in our last newsletter ("A Closer Look at *Winona's Pony Cart*," Spring 2021) when we discussed Maud Hart Lovelace's positive message of inclusivity. Maud does an exemplary job of creating Syrian characters and integrating them into her stories—not only in *Pony Cart*, but also in *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill* and, most especially, *Emily of Deep Valley*.

But two BT books (*Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown* and *Betsy and Joe*) include scenes and an illustration of white characters in blackface, which can be jarring and disturbing to today's readers. Prompted by a parent who asked for guidance on discussing these chapters with her daughter, we created "Discussing Race and Betsy-Tacy with Children," which includes background information and suggested talking points for this important family conversation.

You can find this and other resources on our website, under "About: Maud Hart Lovelace" (scroll down to "Betsy-Tacy Books" for the complete list).

BETSY-TACY TRIVIA: (MOSTLY MURMURING) LAKE EDITION

Can you fill in the missing words? Answers are on page 15.

by Michelle May

1. From *Betsy-Tacy*: While they ate they watched the sun setting behind Tacy's house. Sometimes the west showed clouds like tiny pink feathers; sometimes it showed purple mountains and _____ lakes; sometimes the clouds were scarlet with gold around the edges. Betsy liked to make up stories, so she made up stories about the sunset. When she couldn't think what to say next, Tacy helped her.

2. From *Heaven to Betsy*: "This is the oak tree she hooked me under," Mr. Ray said, leading the way across the lawn, ankle deep in leaves, to an oak with leaves the color of Mrs. Ray's _____.

   "I was camping down by the lake shore," he went on, "with a bunch of young fellows. We needed salt and knowing Jule Warrington I came up to her house after supper to borrow a cupful. That was my finish, that cup of salt. I didn't get back to the tent until midnight, and then I was hooked."

3. From *Betsy in Spite of Herself*: "This is the end of something, Bob," Mrs. Ray kept saying. "It's the first break in the family. Next year Julia will be gone."

   "Minneapolis isn't very far away," Mr. Ray answered with his usual optimism. "Besides, she isn't going until fall. We're all going out to the Inn at Murmuring Lake and have one swell-_____ vacation."

4. From *Betsy Was a Junior*: Betsy Ray sat in a rowboat which was anchored in Babcock's Bay, two watery miles opposite Murmuring Lake Inn, where the Ray family had been spending the summer. The oars were folded across the boat and on the seat beside her lay a fat notebook which she used as a journal and several sharply pointed pencils. She sat with her arms bound about her knees, staring at a gauzy-winged dragon fly which had come to rest on the prow of the boat. Her expression was serious, not to say grim. She was taking _____.

5. From *Betsy Was a Junior*: She wandered over to Uncle Keith's trunk, her beloved desk. Above it hung a picture of a long-legged white _____ which Herbert had sent her. She kept it above the trunk because it reminded her of Babcock's Bay out at Murmuring Lake.

6. From *Betsy and Joe*: Betsy always loved the late summer return from Murmuring Lake to the house on the corner of High Street and _____. Mr. Ray had always mowed the lawn. He had clipped the hydrangeas and bridal wreath and set the sprinkler going. Anna, the hired girl, had usually come back a few days earlier, so the house was aired and clean. But it never looked like home until Mrs. Ray had scattered books and magazines about, and the girls had cut flowers for the vases.

7. From *Betsy and Joe*: She was glad she had put sachet bags into her stationery and that she had received for her birthday a sealing wax set, colored sticks of wax and a seal with her initial on it. Scents and sealing wax were _____, of course, but Julia had told her long ago that even with a boy of your own sort, which Joe certainly was, a little _____ didn't hurt.

   "I'll write to him tonight," thought Betsy. She slapped the reins and Old Mag, refreshed by her drink and the rest, went forward briskly toward Murmuring Lake.

8. From *Betsy and the Great World*: There were mountains on the horizon, hazy as _____ mountains at first, but the train climbed past hillside pastures and sloping vineyards. Soon pineclad mountains were rising all around her. Now and then a stream or waterfall caused Betsy to squeal with delight.

   But the lakes choked her with their beauty.

   "A lake at the base of a mountain is the loveliest sight in the world. It must be!" she thought.

9. From *Carney's House Party*: At last they caught sight of the fleecy willows, cottonwoods, and poplars bordering Murmuring Lake. It was the largest lake in the county and enclosed by wooded shores except where farms had lakeside fields and meadows. The lake today was like watered silk.

   "There'll be water lilies over in Babcock's Bay. Shall we get a boat and row over after dinner?" Carney asked as they walked toward the Inn, a spreading _____ building rimmed with narrow porches.

10. From *Betsy's Wedding*: "You're a very nice wife," Joe announced. "Shouldn't be surprised if I stayed in love with you for a considerable length of time. Say—I want to be reasonable about this—say, a lifetime."

    Betsy frowned in thought. "Well," she answered, "since you're being so conservative, I will be, too. I'll stay in love with you for a lifetime, too."

    And they went, laughing, into each other's arms, and caught hands, and ran out of their cottage—a rough, unplastered, _____-smelling cottage, perched on stilts, and painted green. They ran across the lawn which was sprinkled with fallen leaves, and down a steep flight of steps to a dock, stretching out into Lake Minnetonka.

MICHELLE MAY lives in rural Deep Valley, where she raises two silly kids with her husband, "the handsomest, dearest, cleverest, most wonderful person in the world"—just as Betsy says of Joe to a gull at Lake Minnetonka, which Michelle was reminded of and amused by while putting together this trivia quiz. (The gull, as she recalls, was unimpressed.)

BETSY-TACY SOCIETY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Our social media family has a new addition! Dedicated volunteer Shelley Harris set up a BTS Tumblr blog:

betsy-tacy-society.tumblr.com

Says Shelley, "The blog is full of quotes, edits, photos and information from Maud's days in Mankato, and a lot of fannish fun!" Be sure to check out her lovely and thoughtful posts.

The BTS Social Media team is posting so much great Betsy-Tacy content online. Thanks to Michelle May, you can find the BTS on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. We also have our own YouTube channel, chock-full of wonderful videos—including Amber Massaglia's "Betsy-Tacy Reading Series" and a tour of Betsy's House led by Penny Banwart. To find us online, search for "Betsy-Tacy Society on [name of platform]."

BONNIE'S BIRTHDAY CAKE

She had made a layer cake with lemon filling, and she frosted it with thick white frosting while Julia and Betsy washed the dishes.

—from *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*

LEMON-FILLED LAYER CAKE

1 cup milk, room temperature
6 egg whites, room temperature
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
2¼ cups cake flour
1¾ cups sugar
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
Zest of half a lemon
8 tablespoons softened butter
4 tablespoons oil
1 cup lemon curd (recipe below)
Whipped frosting of choice

This recipe for this delectable cake (and other goodies) can be found in *Beyond Domestic Science: Recipes from Betsy-Tacy*, available in our Gift Shop

Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans. In a medium bowl, combine milk, egg whites (reserve the yolks for the curd), and vanilla, and whisk thoroughly. In separate bowl combine flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and lemon zest, and stir to combine. Add butter in pieces, one at a time, stirring to combine until no pieces are visible. Slowly add oil until mixture resembles crumbs. Add milk mixture and beat until light and fluffy.

Divide batter evenly between cake pans and bake for about 25 minutes in a moderate oven [350–375°]. Remove from oven and cool in pans for 15 minutes, then invert onto wire racks to cool completely.

Once cooled completely, use a large serrated knife to cut each cake into two even layers. Brush off excess crumbs. On top of three layers, pipe medium-consistency frosting all the way around the top of the layer, 1/4 inch from the edge. Spoon ½ cup lemon curd onto the top of each layer and spread with spoon. Carefully place layers on top of one another, ending with a layer with no lemon curd on it.

LEMON CURD

5 egg yolks
½ cup sugar
¼ cup lemon juice
Grated zest of 2 lemons
6 tablespoons butter

In a heavy saucepan, combine the egg yolks and sugar and whisk vigorously for 1 minute. Add the lemon juice and zest and whisk for 1 minute more. Stir constantly over low heat and cook gently until slightly thickened, 10–15 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in butter. Cool, stirring occasionally. Chill before using.

The Betsy-Tacy illustrations by Lois Lenski and Vera Neville and the quotes from Maud Hart Lovelace in this newsletter are used with permission from HarperCollins Publishers.

WHAT IS THAT?

by Katie Watts

EDITOR'S NOTE: "What *Is* That?" (a new recurring column) makes its debut in this issue. As time passes and BT readership becomes younger, some references that were clear 80 years ago can be puzzling to today's readers. Are there phrases from The Tomes that have you rumpling your Psyche Knot? We're here to help. Send your queries to Katie Watts at minglemopper@gmail.com, and she'll do her best to solve your biggest mysteries. (The BT ones, that is. She doesn't guarantee anything else.)

[from Tacy's letter] "Your mother said I could tell you that they have a surprise for you . . . It's nice for you, but not so nice for me, but that's all right." . . . A Peter Thompson suit? thought Betsy, striding up the road. But that would not be not nice for Tacy.

—from *Heaven to Betsy*

Have you ever worn a sailor-style suit (pleated skirt, long waist, V-necked, with a square-knotted tie)? Congratulations: You've worn a **Peter Thomson-style suit**!

Peter Thomson (note that there's no "p"—either Maud, her editor, or both misspelled it) was a tailoring house in New York and Philadelphia around 1900. Thomson, a former naval tailor, designed sailor suits for women and children: cotton or linen for summer wear, wool in winter. The style was popular and considered an ideal uniform for female students. Less than 20 years later, the style was described as "synonymous with good taste for girls of 14–18 years old for many years."

My amusing PTS anecdote: In 1970, I found a coral PTS lookalike. We were made for each other, I thought. The color and style were both flattering.

I wore it exactly once.

Why? Because I lived in San Francisco, where that cool sea breeze never stops, especially in the late afternoon. The fabric was the lightest possible cotton, and as I got on the cable car for my ride home, that cool sea breeze flipped my skirt up to my waist. "Well, that was more of a view than I expected," commented the cable car grip, as my face turned the color of the dress.

Everything was so fastidiously neat that Betsy was surprised to see a doll dress hanging on [Margaret's] bedpost. . . . "You and Julia keep something hanging on your beds," said Margaret, referring, of course, to the combing jackets.

—from *Betsy Was a Junior*

Combing jackets were small, loose garments meant to be slipped on and off easily as girls and women completed their toilette. According to 1916's *School Sewing Based on Home Problems*, "It should be loose and comfortable, as it is worn only in the privacy of the girl's room."

The 1910 edition of *Every Women's Encyclopaedia* noted, "In these days of ready-made clothing, some people consider it a waste of time to make a negligee; but a home-made article has these advantages over a bought one—better material will be obtained, better work, and a more distinctive note in the design."

Simplicity and comfort were key. Again from the *Encyclopaedia*: "As it is generally worn only for a short time while dressing the hair and finishing the toilette, it should be simple in construction and perfectly easy, allowing full play to the movement of the arms."

If you can't live without a combing jacket of your own, information on how to sew one is available at sewhistorically.com, from where much of this information was drawn.

KATIE WATTS, an editor and a teacher of memoir writing, lives in Northern California. In addition to Betsy-Tacy, she enjoys musicals, raspberries, baseball (Go Giants!), and playing trivia.

REMEMBERING DAVID ALLAN

The Betsy-Tacy Society recently lost a good friend, David Allan, who passed away on June 29. David was a talented woodworker, painter, and sculptor. After retiring from the Memorial Library at Mankato State University in 2001, he and wife Nancy (who died in 2018) owned and operated the Winslow Woodcarving Studio for many years. In 2008, David and Nancy created the beautiful three-dimensional signs outside the Betsy and Tacy Houses.

Crafting the signs was a multi-year project. The Allans' goal was to create unique pieces, each thematically capturing a special moment of joy in Betsy and Tacy's lives. From the March 2008 *Deep Valley Sun*:

The sign for Betsy's House uses an iconic image of the two girls coming out of a book, historically juxtaposed and running, literally, into the readers' lives. The Tacy's House sign exhibits the two girls sitting on the fence enjoying each other's company, sharing their hopes, dreams, experiences, and joys.

The signs were funded by grants and donations, and the Allans also generously donated much of their time. Says Julie Schrader (BTS Executive Director at the time), "These signs have been a popular place for many visitors to Deep Valley to pose for a picture. I'm proud to have worked with this talented couple on this project." Lona Falenczykowski adds, "We were so saddened to learn of David's recent death. Both the Allans were such talented artists. We only need to look out our windows to be reminded of their amazing craftsmanship."

We are grateful to have this tangible memory of two individuals whose kindness was matched only by their talent.

NEW! BETSY-TACY SOCIETY: FOUR MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

The BTS has been working to ensure that members of all ages receive the special benefits targeted directly to them. While all BTS members get free admission to the Betsy-Tacy Houses during regular business hours and free or discounted admission to BTS events, there are additional benefits for each of the four levels.

The **BTT Club** is for our youngest members, ages 5–12. These folks receive a special newsletter titled *Everything Pudding*, mailed four times a year. In addition, members who are interested in having a pen pal can be matched with another BTT Club member. This membership is $10 for one year.

The brand-new **Young Adult membership** is for members ages 13–21. These folks receive a special gift from our Gift Shop, a link to our Tumblr blog, and one or two YA E-Blasts per year. This membership is $10 for one year.

Adult (ages 22–61) and **Senior** (ages 62+) members receive four issues of *The Agony Column* (our electronic newsletter, sent via email) and three issues of the *Deep Valley Sun* (our print newsletter, sent via U.S. mail) per year. Adult membership is $25 for one year; Senior membership is $20 for one year.

If you know a BT fan who's the right age for one of these new levels, please let them know about it. A BTS membership is also a wonderful gift!

(Note: We no longer offer membership at the Student, Household, or Maud's Club levels.)

OUR E-NEWSLETTER

The Betsy-Tacy E-Blast (now called *The Agony Column*), our electronic newsletter, is a full year old. It's emailed to all BTS adult and senior members on the first day of each season. The Summer 2021 issue, our fifth, contained not only the wonderful interview with Sophie von Haselberg, but also a beautiful photo essay on "Deep Valley Real Estate" (pictures of what some of the Crowds' homes look like today), interviews with Mitali Perkins and Varsa Shah, a rare photo of Marion and Bill Everett ("Carney and Sam"), recipes for iconic picnic foods mentioned in the books, useful pointers on how to tell a snowball from a hydrangea (spoiler: it's nearly impossible), and some exciting suggestions for summer reading.

Issue Number 5, June 2021

THE AGONY COLUMN

NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE GREAT WORLD OF BETSY-TACY FANS

Hello friends, and welcome to the lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer!

And now Commencement week was in full swing, along with a burst of Minnesota heat. Betsy had trouble keeping her hair in curl for the class play, Class Day and all the other festivities.

—from Heaven to Betsy

Before you start reading: See that note at the top, "View this email in your browser" (in tiny letters above the BTS logo)? The Snappy Brothers (my advisory group) strongly recommend that you click on that first, rather than read the Blast via email: they say the formatting will look much better. You have been advised.

It's been a full year of Betsy-Tacy E-Blasts, and with this issue we begin Year 2. My transformation over the past year has not been nearly as dramatic as Betsy Ray's between *Deep Valley* and *Heaven to Betsy*, but nonetheless it brings me great satisfaction to look over the last four Blasts and think about all I've learned.

And it's also the perfect time to announce our Blast's new name! I wanted something that was more "Great World" than "Deep Valley," as so many of us live outside of Mankato—and then a friend suggested "The Agony Column." adding, "You never know WHAT you'll find inside!" Long-time fans may recall

In short, it's a cracking good read! Many members said that this issue was their favorite one yet. But we've noticed that not all of our members are reading it—the Blast has only a 70% "open" rate. We're curious as to why:

- If you've never received this newsletter in your inbox, please let us know. We may not have your current email address. The Blast may also be going to your junk mail, so you might check there.
- If you've received it but haven't opened it because you didn't know what it was—well, now you know!
- If you have an email address, but you simply don't check your email very often—perhaps now you have an incentive?
- If you don't use email at all, might you have a child or sibling who does? We may be able to send it to them to share with you. Let us know—we're happy to consider an option that will work for you. (Unfortunately, we're not able to offer a print version of this newsletter; at least for now, it's email-only.)

The fall Blast will hit members' inboxes on September 20. Please be sure your membership is up to date! Lots of fun pieces are planned for this one—you won't want to miss it.

A MOST WELCOME RETURN VISIT

In 2007, before any significant restoration had occurred at Betsy's House, a cadre of volunteers met in Deep Valley to plan what became the 2009 Betsy-Tacy Convention. Among them was Convention Co-Chair Barb Fecteau from Beverly, Massachusetts, who took one look at Betsy's (grungy) bathroom and said, "NO." She asked Lona for some cleaning supplies, Lona cheerfully (if a tad confusedly) furnished them, and Barb dug in and scrubbed that toilet—to everyone's delight!

Barb has since returned to Mankato many times, and her most recent visit occurred this past July. Though the Betsy and Tacy Houses are now cleaned regularly, Lona was delighted to greet Barb with some *very special supplies*. Alas, there's been no word on whether a white-glove test commenced or if Barb followed through with her famous elbow grease and can-do spirit.

We love our volunteers!

Trivia Quiz Answers (from page 10)

1. Green
2. Hair
3. Elegant
4. Stock
5. Bird
6. Plum
7. La de da
8. Cloud
9. White
10. Lakey