Notices

Martha's Kidlit Newsletter

Martha's Kidlit Newsletter is a monthly publication devoted to collectors of out-of-print children's books. It contains in-depth articles about authors, illustrators, and children's books, as well as sales and wanted lists, book dealer advertisements, and other information of interest to readers and collectors. Subscriptions are $30 for twelve issues. An index and back issues are also available. Contact *Martha's Kidlit Newsletter,* P. O. Box 1488, Ames, IA 50014.

Cheryl Harness

Here's what some well-known folks are saying about Cheryl Harness's book *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington, 1837-1865.*

"A superb children's book—attractive and historically accurate."

Paul Simon
United States Senator

"Cheryl Harness has done it again! *Abe Lincoln Goes to Washington: 1837-1865* is a blockbuster! It is not just another illustrated children's book. An accomplished artist and writer, Ms. Harness melds these talents to tell the story of Mr. Lincoln's rise to greatness in a manner that touches the soul and engenders a healthy interest among young readers in the history of our country during those tragic years. It is a book that parents and grandparents will want to share with their children and grandchildren."

Edwin C. Bearss
Chief Historian Emeritus
National Park Service

Cheryl's many talents are well-known to members of the Betsy-Tacy Society. In addition to her books, she has created jewelry, ornaments, and paintings with Betsy-Tacy themes. Her books are available at libraries and bookstores everywhere.

The Secret Allure of Old Books

The state of euphoria a historian experiences when unearthing a long-forgotten manuscript may be chemically induced, according to *Lingua Franca* magazine. It cites a report in the *Lancet*, a British medical journal. A fungus that grows on moldy books apparently releases spores when disturbed, and the airborne spores can induce hallucinations. "It is not inconceivable," said dermatologist R. J. Hay of London, "that intoxication might follow inhalation of spores from suitable mold fungi in libraries...The stuff of inspiration for many great literary figures may have been nothing more than a quick sniff of the bouquet of moldy books."

New York Times News Service

Cheryl Harness

Our Children's Page

When Maud was 10, her father had her first book of poems published in a little booklet. (One of those poems is on page 7 of this issue.) Surely we can do as much for some of the young writers in our midst!

Bound into the center of this issue is a four-page insert that the editors of the Betsy-Tacy Society hope will be enjoyed by our younger members and fans. The little story reproduced there was written by Emily Dougal, the six-year-old grand-niece of one of our members, Ruth Doan MacDougall. Ruth sent it to us with no expectations that it would be published; she just thought we'd enjoy it. But it gave us an idea! If young readers were given a story to illustrate, perhaps it would encourage them to write their own stories and poems in such a format. The small size is non-threatening to either writers or illustrators, and the format lends itself easily to photocopies of the young author's work. We have permission from Emily and her parents to encourage you to make as many copies of her story as you need, so you can share it with many children. Think about reproducing the page that contains the cover onto a cardstock-weight paper. Provide extra page copies so that a spoiled picture doesn't ruin the book. You might even trim the finished book with a paper-cutter so that the edges will be nice and even. When you use the tools at your disposal to enhance a young person's efforts, you're helping that child take pride in his or her work.

And let *us* know if the kids *you* know like this idea. Would you like to see the work of other young writers in future issues? We'd have to devise a way to give everyone a turn – young writers shouldn't get rejection slips so early in their careers! – but surely we can work out something. Let us know!

Marney Wilde
Associate Editor

One Last Reminder!

Convention registration materials will NOT be sent automatically. You need to request them, using the envelope bound into this issue! Do it now! Space is limited. See pages 8 and 9 for further information.

Merian's Column

Merian, who is still not a very happy camper, sends all of her friends in the Betsy-Tacy Society HAPPIEST WISHES FOR 1997.

Temporary address:
Merian Kirchner
St. Elizabeth Ann's Nursing Home
91 Tompkins Avenue #104
Staten Island, New York 10304

Merian Kirchner is Maud Hart Lovelace's daughter and a regular contributor to the Betsy-Tacy Journal. *She has been very ill for the past several months, but is improving daily.*

This Hart family coffeepot is one of many treasures that Merian has donated to the Betsy-Tacy Society.

Dear Sistren,

As most of you know, Merian is recuperating at St. Elizabeth Ann's Nursing Home on Staten Island, but "recuperation" in this case will be a lengthy and arduous process because so much is involved: she's on a ventilator which means she needs speech therapy to recover her voice, and physical therapy to regain her strength. Fortunately, St. Elizabeth Ann's is a wonderful place staffed by truly caring nurses, therapists, and doctors. (It's no surprise that one of Jeannette Newman's dearest friends works there.)

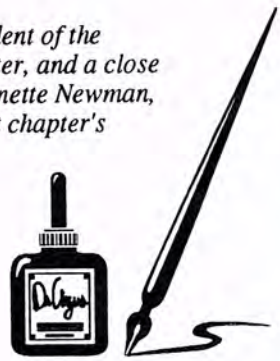
Merian has so enjoyed everyone's cards and letters--they really are a lifeline especially given the restrictions due to her condition. It's difficult for her to respond individually but she sends along a big, warm thank you to everyone. Merian is also enjoying immensely the group read of the B-T books (so am I!) on the Betsy-Tacy listserv. I hope it's okay that I print out the posts to read to her. Of course I've never managed to stay current, and we're only just starting the BWAJ posts.

Now about Merian. Well, she is so Merian, which means amazing. She's unable to talk but what a clear, strong writing voice she has. It's a slightly dreamy experience to have long conversations face-to-face with someone who communicates solely by writing. And her comments, questions, and requests are generally as concise and nuanced as a poem, making me believe that some people can be writers by constitution (or genetics?) not just by profession. (I freely admit to a friend's prejudice about this but I've heard other people comment on the resonance of even her one word written responses.) As to her outlook, I'd describe Merian as being in good spirits for someone who is leading a more normal life. For someone who's dealing with her daily challenges I'd describe her spirits as incredible. And she is able to maintain a true equanimity about her present condition.

I'll try to keep you all updated by posting on the listserv, and writing for the *Journal*.

Maudvibes to all,
Andrea Shaw

Andrea is former president of the Greater New York chapter, and a close friend of Merian's. Jeannette Newman, mentioned above, is that chapter's current president.



A Note From Lona's Pony Cart

Dear Friends,

The Betsy-Tacy Society is thrilled that Elizabeth Riley has agreed to be our keynote speaker for the 1997 BTS Convention. Ms. Riley served as editor for Maud and many other authors at the Thomas Y. Crowell Company, and was responsible for introducing Lois Lenski to Maud. *Emily of Deep Valley* is dedicated to Elizabeth Riley.

Our photo-illustrated feature article, "I Remember Mankato," is our special gift to you as a membership bonus. Our copy was supplied by Bill Edwards. We would like to thank him for sharing many newspaper clippings and correspondence between the Lovelaces and his father, Thomas Edwards, who was born in Mankato in 1878. Thomas was very popular and knew everyone in town. His talent for writing led to his friend, *Mankato Free Press* editor Cliff Russell, asking him to review many of Maud and Delos' works for the paper, which he did under the *nom-de-plume* of Willie Putt. Mr. Edwards also advised Maud on details about Mankato at the turn-of-the-century, and his assistance greatly enriched the historical accuracy of the Betsy-Tacy books. We will be sharing some of their letters and his reviews with you in future journals.

Thanks once again to Merian for the many treasures she has given to the BTS, including the coffee urn shown on Page 16. During my hibernation this winter in Deep Valley, I had the opportunity to go through the boxes she sent. I came across a book that Bick gave Maud, *The Conqueror* by Gertrude Atherson, copyright 1902, 35th printing, December 11th, 1934. It is inscribed "Maudie, from Bick, Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday! May 26, 1937." And I thought I was the only one to procrastinate!

The BTS extends deepest sympathy to the Mankato family of attorney Charlie Ingman. Charlie donated much of his time and his many talents to us. We would also like to express our sympathies to the family of Julie Chuba in the loss of precious Noelle, and to the many other members who have recently lost loved ones.

Thanks to you who support the society through purchases made from our shop, and thanks to Sandi for handling all shop sales. We deeply appreciate all your donations to the house fund. Thanks to Patty and Marney, and all who contributed to the *Journal*. We look forward to seeing you in Deep Valley.

Lona

National News

by Dolly Blomquist

Report on the National Board Meeting, January 18, 1997

As usual the order of business was the Convention in July. Is there anything more important?

The Christmas Open House at Tacy's House on November 30, 1996 was great fun. We had a nice and manageable group. There were refreshments, activities, and musical entertainment. The glass Christmas ornament for ten cents was a wonderful activity that was truly enjoyed by all ages. The tree is practically bare now and we need to replenish our ornament supply.

The really important activity was the annual Christmas Party. Due to the streak of bad weather we changed plans and had the meeting and party at Tacy's House. (Originally we were planning on the annual party at Kelly Reuter's—maybe next year?) The first to arrive at Tacy's found a small package that had been delivered to Tacy Kelly and was sent by Grandma Austin (Suzanne Nezin from Lake Forest, California). It was such fun to open and find the note from Grandma to Tacy explaining that she had found this ornament that reminded her of Tacy. It was beautiful—a "Victorian" girl with angel wings and "red" curls hanging out from under her cap and her hands in a muff. It did look just like Tacy! Lona hung the ornament on Tacy's tree right near the top. Thank you, Suzanne, for a wonderful keepsake! We then all had our turn in selecting a package from the table to find an ornament from Betsy, Tacy, or Tib. The ornament exchange is a lovely way to keep the girls' tradition of Christmas.

We sang "Happy Birthday" to Merian Kirchner and Wendi Masters (she shares the day with Merian—lucky her). We wish we could have been in New York with Merian to sing in person and have cake with her. We did have cake along with lots of other goodies and then parted to return in two weeks and guess what? Work on Convention '97!

Notice of Annual Meeting Saturday, April 26th, 12:30 p.m. at Tacy's House.

Greater Chicago Chapter • Greater New York Chapter • Southern California Chapter • San Francisco GOUBTBSS • Chapter

Washington, D.C. Chapter

The Washington, D.C. Chapter met October 26 for a Halloween party at Kate McPeak's house in Herndon, Virginia. All present were costumed and eagerly gobbled hors d'oeuvres, biscuits, stew, and apple cake. There was no grinning jack-o-lantern at the bottom of the stairs, but the champagne bowl did contain one floating hand. We discussed our next get-together, a tea to be held at the Swiss embassy in November in honor of dollmaker Heidi Ott. She's designed the Faithful Friends line of dolls, sold only at Target with the companion book written by Sharla Whalen. Kate bid us farewell with goody bags and some of her delightful handmade miniature pieces. Plans for 1997 include a tea at the Hay-Adams Hotel in Washington, and a picnic on the grounds of the Washington Monument.

Julie Christian

Boulder, Colorado Crowd

Here in Boulder we have held three Betsy-Tacy gatherings, and we're inviting any other members of the Betsy-Tacy Society who live in or near Boulder to get in touch with us. We're enjoying getting together and would like to have all of you in our area join us.

On December 15 we had a fudge party and ornament exchange, with Claudia Mills reading the Christmas shopping chapter from *Downtown*, while the young people made straw ornaments.

Our contact people are:

Julie Leonard
1534 Marshall Road
Boulder, CO 80303
(303) 499-4811

Claudia Mills
2575 Briarwood Drive
Boulder, CO 80303
(303) 499-8638

Julie Leonard

San Francisco GOUBTBSS

The Grande Olde Underground Betsy-Tacy Birdwatching and Singing Society (GOUBTBSS, pronounced Goob-Tibs) has been very active since last year, but I, its founder and de-facto leader, have been remiss in keeping the BT Journal up to date on our capers.

Here is a brief rundown: We have met people from all over during the past year! I got together with NY BTers Constance Martin and Elizabeth Kuzina just after Thanksgiving (we'd met through the Listserv first), and then rejoiced in being part of Betsy's Christmas in Milwaukee (I took my mom along, too) in 1995, the delights of which Julie Chuba has already described in another issue. Also during Thanksgiving, Maria Champlin had tea with Marti from Hawaii, who was in San Francisco for the holiday.

We had our Skating Get-together (in honor of Tib, Carney, and Bonnie) in January, 1996; several wonderful BTers from all over the Bay Area converged for this. A smaller group had high tea at the St. Francis Hotel when Constance Martin was in town; Sharyn November (also from New York) was in San Francisco just in time for our 2nd Annual Maud/Betsy Birthday Brunch in April, which was just as much fun as our first one. Various other brunch mates from all over arrived at other times, including Melanie Rigney from Chicago/Indianapolis, and Maureen Thomas from Pasadena.

Maria and I scoped out Opera in the Park as a possible future GOUBTBSS Get-together (in honor of Julia). This annual San Francisco delight is always on the Sunday following the opening of the Opera season, and with a little organization, it could be a stunning affair.

I attended the American Library Association/New York Hospitality Evening arranged by Constance. This was an absolute delight! ALA will be in San Francisco

Photo provided by Joy Maca

Skating GOUBTBSS included (Back Row) Donna Trifilo, Maria Champlin, Joy Macari, Carla Kozak; (Middle Row) Elaine Galavas, Joan Jackson; and Katie Watts in in the Front Row.

Notes

Washington, D.C. Chapter • Cyberspace Crowd • New England NEWBETSY's • Arizona Group • Boulder, Colorado Group •

in June, 1997, and I will do my best to be as gracious a hostess as Constance to any BTers who will be attending the conference, as well as Bay Area non-library folks. The date for this will probably be Monday evening, June 30, 1997. I am hoping to reserve my library's—the Chinatown Branch—meeting room for this event.

We were graced with Kathy Baxter's presence in October. Again, a small group gathered for high time at high tea, at the King George Hotel. We gazed with delight at Kathy's photos of Maud's High Street house, and other meaningful Mankato locations.

I was back in Milwaukee in October and met Rachel Pocras, who recently moved there, and whom I first met on the Maud-l listserv. Cyberspace is a great way to meet Maud folks from all over; a "screening process," so to speak!

GOUBTBSS is an informal group of Maud/Betsy enthusiasts, and our home addresses range from Watsonville to Petaluma in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. If you're living in this area, or coming to visit, and want to include Betsy in your plans, please contact me! Though arranging large group get-togethers is difficult (we're all so busy!), we can usually arrange a small but congenial party fairly quickly! I can be reached at (415) 664-1640, and my email address is carlak@sfpl.lib.ca.us.

Carla Kozak

NEWBETSY's

The New England Group of Betsy-Tacy fans now has a name! We are the NEWBETSY's, which stands for New England Women Boisterously Eating, Talking, and Sharing Youth-Lit. Thanks to Jennifer Davis-Kay for this stroke of creative genius.

The NEWBETSY's had their fall outing on October 19. We started at the Nashoba Valley Winery in Bolton, Massachusetts, where we picked the last of the fall apples and went on a winery tour From there we went back to Janet Hamilton's house for some Halloween festivities which included a delicious potluck lunch that highlighted our group's varied cooking talents. After appeasing our delicate appetites, the group divided into four teams: the Betsys, the Tacys, the Tibs, and the Mrs. Rays for a trivia contest to figure out which 24 members of the crowd had come to the sheet and pillowcase Halloween party. The Tibs scored 100%, showing a wisdom beyond their years, since not one of them was over the age of 25. Everyone went home with a new book and a Halloween pumpkin.

We're all looking forward to a holiday party at Deb Holland's house on December 15, and another great year of activities in 1997. If anyone in the New England area wants to join us, please contact Janet Hamilton at (508) 461-0099, or on email at hamilton@al.mos.org.

Janet Hamilton

Southern California Chapter

In October the Southern California Sistren gathered for a real Betsy-Tacy Halloween Party. Hot cider, steaming coffee, and all things chocolate were served to the hungry crowd. When appetites were satiated, Alice Merchant read aloud the Halloween chapter from *Heaven to Betsy*. Following this, Sistren snapped apples, walked down stairs backwards and called on the Ouiji Board to answer the mysteries of life. Perhaps the highlight of the day was having B-T read aloud—something very few of us had experienced before!

On January 11 the Chapter will hold its Second Annual Ornament Exchange Party at Mary Thiessen's house in Long Beach. This year it will be organized by the chapter's new Social Chairperson, Arline Mues. She spearheaded the Halloween party and, having proved her worth, was quickly asked by Suzanne Nezin, Chapter President, to continue in her good

***Chapter News,** continued on page 20*

Photo by Arline Mues

In Southern California, Alice Merchant reads aloud the Halloween chapter from Heaven to Betsy.

The Washington, D.C. Chapter gathered at the Swiss Embassy for Afternoon Tea. in November, 1996. From left to right are Gayle Rucker, Treasurer, D.C. Chapter; Emily Scott, visiting with her mom Lona Falenczykowski from Mankato, MN; Betsy Sherman, D.C. Chapter President, and Sally Hand, a member of the D.C. Chapter.

***Chapter Notes** continued from page 17*

works. Thankfully, she agreed. Arline has also graciously volunteered to be Keeper of the Listserv. Thank heavens for Arline!

Maureen Thomas has been earnestly working to gather information about traveling to this summer's convention by train. She provided the Southern California Chapter with piles of material at the October meeting and promises more to come.

Mary Thiessen

Greater Chicago Chapter

The rollicking adventures of the intrepid Greater Chicago Chapter continued throughout the fall season, with the first chapter Halloween Party, held in October at the home of Melanie Rigney, and the third annual holiday party, held in December. The Halloween Party featured a ouija board, a graveyard pudding filled with favors, textually correct apple-snapping and a furious book raffle that garnered many welcome tomes for the never-enough-books set.

After such an uproarious Halloween Party, the chapter managed to settle down to real business with its November meeting at the Schiller Park Public Library, where plans were made for the holiday party which followed quickly thereafter. This year's holiday party was a jolly little celebration, with an amazing display of ornament-making, organized by our crafty sisters, Maureen Eichinger and Mary Ellen Conley. Another book raffle ensued, followed by a cookie and ornament exchange.

With the return of Melanie Rigney (after a brief employment sojourn to the wilds of Indianapolis), the chapter plans many a jolly celebration through the coming year, including a proposed journey to the land of the Limberlost. Our first chapter meeting of 1997 will take place at the home of the chapter president, who will use her good china on the condition that no book raffles take place.

Dust the Naughty Chair!

Nancy Drew and Company, an anthology on girls' series fiction edited by Sherrie Inness of Miami University of Ohio, and containing a chapter on the Betsy-Tacy series by Maureen Reed, will be published this spring by Bowling Green University Press. Not only will this tome add to the library of any true Betsy-Tacy fan, it will also help the genre of children's literature to

Julie Naughton visits with author Norma Johnston at the New York Chapter's get-together for visiting ALA members.

New York Chapter members with American Library Association friends

gain a serious foothold in the scholarly world.

Children's Literature Conference Announced

Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN is proud to announce the Second Biennial Conference on Modern Critical Approaches to Children's Literature to be held in Nashville, TN April 10-12, 1997. Keynote speakers will be Lois Kuznets (*When Toys Come Alive)* and Perry Nodelman (*Words About Pictures)*; papers dealing with critical, rather than pedagogical, aspects of children's literature will be presented. For information, please contact Ellen Donovan at Middle Tennessee State University, P. O. Box 70, Murfreesboro, TN 37132; email: edonovan@mtsu.edu. Phone (615) 898-2653.

Katrine Poe

Greater New York Chapter

I rarely need an excuse for a party, especially when I heard that the ALA (American Library Association) was having its annual convention in NYC in July of 1996 *and* that both my mother, a librarian at Northeastern University in Boston, and Carla Kozak, children's librarian extaordinaire at the Chinatown branch in San Francisco, were heading here for the event. Jeannette Newman, president of the Greater New York Chapter, agreed it would be fun for our group to host an event for visiting BT librarians (unfortunately, after all our planning, Jeanette—usually the life of the party and always impressive with her encyclopedic scrapbook of BT functions, had to work late on the night in question, so we had to do without her and her daughters, Cara and Christina) and that was all the encouragement necessary. I borrowed my sister's apartment for the evening and started making invitations.

The party was on one of those sticky New York nights that end in a downpour, and about 33 guests poured in from six states and the District of Columbia (we could have gotten some added mileage if we had counted Alabama, where Ashley Mason grew up, or England, where Diane Waggoner was about to head to complete her Ph.D., but that would have been cheating.)

An unexpected guest of honor was writer Norma Johnston from New Jersey. Many of you have read her *Keeping Days* novels, but perhaps you don't know that Norma dedicated her first book, *The Wishing Star, to* Maud Hart Lovelace. At an earlier BT function, Norma was nice enough to bring

***Chapter Notes,** continued on page 20*

<At the New York Chapter Party for ALA friends Pictured: Mary Glascock (NY), Naomi Lederer (CO), Amy Schwartz (DC), Linda Duchin (NY); in background on right are Alice Stern (MA) and Janet Hamilton (MA).

Chapter Notes continued from page 19

and share some of her correspondence from Maud during the years when her manuscript was considered too much of a "problem novel" to be published. Norma's forthcoming novel, *Lotta's Progress*, is about the German family in *Little Women* (yes, the ones that ate the March family's Christmas breakfast!) and she described how her research on Louisa May Alcott had heightened her curiosity about peripheral characters in Louisa/Jo's life. Other published authors in attendance were Fran Manushkin (*Latkes and Applesauce* is my favorite of her recent work) and Andrea Shaw (*Seen That, Now What?)* We raffled off an autographed copy of Andrea's book and she signed others that several people had brought with them.

A large contingent from the BT listserv was in attendance, many meeting for the first time, and it was entertaining to see what people really looked like and interesting to see the different ages represented. We teased Amy Schwartz, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, that her paper would definitely want a story about the Betsy-Tacy Society rather than the convention she was in town to cover. After all, who could be more fascinating and absorbing than we are? It never ceases to amaze me how BT fans who have never met can immediately start (and rarely stop) talking about anything!

See you in Mankato!

Constance Martin

Cyberspace Crowd

There is nothing so comforting as curling up with a favorite book and re-entering the world of its pages one more time. The Maud Hart Lovelace listserv members decided to revisit Deep Valley this fall by reading and discussing the Betsy-Tacy books together online, thanks to a suggestion by listserv member Marsha Qualey – a project which will continue into 1997. Some members are reading the books for the first time, while others are re-reading them for the umpteenth time; some are reading them aloud to children, while others are reading happily to themselves. Each book has a moderator to start the conversations rolling and to keep us somewhat on track, but it takes little urging for MHL fans to talk about some of their favorite stories! Comments, debates, questions, observations, and reminiscences have been zipping around the world as we read and share Maud's books together.

Part of the fun has been discovering what other people enjoy about the books, prompting many to comment that "I never noticed that before!" when reading an observation. Topics mentioned have included recipes for fried potatoes (for which Mrs. Ray was famous), Tacy's ringlets, library memories, forbidden reading (such as Rena's dime novels), rules for the card game "euchre" (which was played by party-goers at the Melborn Hotel), technological advances in Betsy's time (horseless carriages and telephones) and our own time, and a good debate on Mrs. Poppy and why we thought the mothers of Deep Valley refused to visit her. Following are some of the many wonderful thoughts and comments about the first four B-T books (beginning with *Betsy-Tacy*):

In response to a question by Marsha about what smells and sounds we associated with the B-T books:

"Depending on the time of year, one might smell wet wool drying, Mr. Ray's pipe tobacco, lilacs, fresh sliced onions, something delicious baking in the oven, coffee, fudge cooling, Extreme Violet perfume, and rose geranium bath salts. In other words, the warm cozy potpourri of a house filled with love. Sounds would include laughter, the tinkling of the piano, voices raised in song and lots of happy chatter. Periodically the gong would sound, calling the occupants to another wonderful meal, lovingly prepared and served."

Arline Mues

On *Betsy-Tacy:*

"One thing I always liked to do when rereading the series is to see how the characters develop and also how bits of 5-year-old Betsy remain in 25-year-old Betsy...she has such a dreaminess and sense of wonder in exploring and imagining things (something Tib lacks) – the kind of romanticism that would have her later looking at Little Syria and imagining future travels. And Tacy completely understands, like the soulmate that she is."

Alice Merchant

"I found myself really lingering over the poignant scene of Betsy, with a mittened finger in her mouth, disappointed because Tacy won't talk to her (when Tacy first moves into the neighborhood) ...That mittened finger just got me—how disappointing to have this little girl just her age run away. But what I like about that scene is that in spite of

her shyness, Tacy manages to get out that one word ("Tacy!") that will eventually lead to their friendship. And we see just how very much Betsy wants to be friends with her."

Jillian Anderson

"One of my favorite parts in this first book is when Betsy and Tacy decide it's time they climbed the Big Hill to the top. I love the way Maud describes this journey, emphasizing the places B&T had visited before (e.g., the tree where they had left the egg for Baby Bee), until they reached the top—undiscovered territory—and they realize that 'they had thought they would be satisfied when once they had climbed the Big Hill. But now they wanted to go down in the ravine, and see this water which sounded so merry, and climb the next hill.' What a nice metaphor! Betsy is always climbing new hills, often with Tacy and Tib in tow, and conquering new problems, moving on to new experiences. Betsy and Tacy reach the plateau of the hill and yearn to go on and see more, whether it's Little Syria or Paris, France, and whether they're meeting new friends, or pondering life's problems. Sometimes Betsy had to be dragged up the hill (such as when she wants to cling to the past), but there's always someone or something pushing her ahead."

Julie Chuba

On *Betsy, Tacy and Tib:*

"Tib just permeates this book, I think. Even in the tone. Gone is the whimsy and fantasy of Betsy-Tacy (all those stories Betsy was always telling) and *voila!* Suddenly our girls are Doing Things. Okay, sure, they are making up adventures—learning to fly, imagining they are beggars, etc.—but they are also actually doing them. They fly (or jump), they beg, they put on shows, they cut hair, they try to be good instead of just asking about heaven. Very proactive, our heroines. I attribute this to the introduction of Tib, the practical one. Of course, they are older, too, which makes a difference. And, once again, that brings me to the familiar conclusion: Maud got it just right! She didn't simply rewrite the first book, she moved forward."

Marsha Qualey

"I think Tib is a great 'straight man.' That line of hers (in the Flying Lady chapter)—'what do you want, Betsy? What are you poking me for?' is a great illustration of her practicality versus Betsy's imagination; in the first chapter we're told that Betsy is the one who comes up with things to do, and Tib does them, but she does them in her own, practical way. She's Bert to Betsy's Ernie."

Jillian Anderson

"I've been thinking over all the comments about Tib, and trying to figure out what it is about her which some of us find irritating. Her competence at Home-Economics-type activities stands in strong contrast to Betsy's disinterest in the same activities. In that, I see Tib as akin to Martha Stewart in both her interests and the response she generates from us. I am awed by Martha Stewart's abilities, and envious as well, and she has strong detractors and defenders—and neither side can really understand the other!

I have no REAL wish to be Martha Stewart, or even to do a portion the of the stuff she seems to achieve so effortlessly—but it would sure be nice to have that level of competence at something! Tib feeds into our insecurities about how we women measure up to our concept of society's traditional expectations of women; she is a born homemaker For those of us who would rather write or type than use a needle and thread, Tib inspires exclamations of both awe and 'ugh.' [While] I wouldn't want to be like Tib, another part of me would give anything to be like Tib!..."

Sara Rest

On *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill*:

"Though I was always fascinated by the Naifi story, I never liked this book very much. My sister and I fought a lot, and I never felt comfortable with the conflict between sisters here. In fact, I think that the Queen of May conflict is a glaring example of where the Rays failed to be good parents, and even qualify in my book as being bad parents. I think it was awful that Bob turned the whole thing into a contest instead of helping them to diffuse the conflict by teaching them to work it out!"

Jess Hobart

"I liked the quarrel because it seemed to be very much like a real quarrel people would have. I could see my sister and me doing just that—arguing, fighting, then feeling so hurt and angry and, finally, sad that this silly argument was hurting our relationship."

Stacy Charlesbois

Chapter Notes, continued on page 24

"It seems to me wonderful and admirable of Maud to make immigration and American diversity a central theme of one of the books, especially for young people, and to do it without turning *Over The Big Hill* into one of those 'issue books' we all love to deplore. But then of course at the time Maud was writing, if not at the time she was actually growing up, the romantic and admiring view of immigration was, I think, considered more of a core American value than now; though the negative view was obviously always present as well. There is more to this – a logical next step in Maud's handling of the girls' growth and development. Just as the arrival of Tib in *Betsy-Tacy and Tib* caused Betsy and Tacy to take a step outside the shared dream world of their initial friendship, and to find that that dream world was actually widened and deepened by the exposure to constant reality checks from sensible Tib, I think the incidents in *Betsy and Tacy Go Over the Big Hill* add up to the little girls' realization that there really is a world outside Deep Valley that they can touch and be touched by. That's what going 'over the Big Hill' really means, isn't it? Little Syria is the entry point for this discovery, a truly DIFFERENT world, right at home, but it leads them outward, for instance, to Mr Ray's wonderful speech to them about biblical Lebanon, Bushara and Naifi: 'Mr. Ray," said Tib, 'is that why Old Bushara gets so mad and chases boys when they yell "dago" at him?' 'It probably is,' said Mr Ray. 'An emeer of Lebanon is a very proud man, and he should be. He's an ancient prince of a very ancient race.' A thrilled silence filled the room.

Thinking about this, I guess I'd say that's why, as noted above, the King of Spain's return letter is such a stunning cap to the Naifi coronation party. After all, they encountered Naifi and Bushara as part of Deep Valley. But the King of Spain they reached out and touched all by themselves! What a triumph!"

Amy Schwartz

On *Betsy and Tacy Go Downtown:*

"One thing I always liked about this book is that it's kind of a bridge-book. It provides a kind of bridge between the previous books and *Heaven to Betsy*. It's still pretty firmly a children's book but here you get to see...the development and description of Betsy as a character in her own right outside of her relationship with Tacy and Tib (in her writing, in the description of her as a 'talker' when she has dessert with Mrs. Poppy, in the fact that the book ends with her own thoughts rather than some sort of statement about Betsy. Tacy, and Tib as a group). Betsy, Tacy, and Tib are in a kind of nether zone between childhood and young adulthood. Hill Street no longer belongs to them, but neither does dating...Gone are the fantasies of growing up, getting two numbers in your age...and all the games of their childhood in the first three books. Here their concerns are going to plays, Betsy's writing, new friendships with Winona, Mrs. Poppy, and Uncle Keith."

Alice Merchant

"I love this book! I feel like I have LIVED this book over the years. I recall making my own baloney sandwich (aka two thick slices of home-made bread) to take with me to the Carnegie Library in Austin, Minnesota so I could be like Betsy...My friend Bev and I, of course, established an annual shopping trip at Christmas that ended with french fries and a coke at the Normandy Cafe. A treasured group of memories."

Sharon Thonen

"This has to be my favorite of all the 'younger' books. I adore the annual holiday shopping trip (and have incorporated a similar trip into my own shopping routine with a best friend). Especially warming is the final sentence in that chapter: 'They walked to Ray's Shoe Store, smiling, holding Christmas in their hands.'"

Cathy Allee

"There is no more loving chapter in ANY book than 'Betsy's Desk.' Don't we all wish our parents responded to our childhood passions as enthusiastically as Betsy's? After Mrs. Ray creates the desk, Betsy runs outside to get her notebooks—and the scene outdoors is described as being heavenly! It's certainly no accident that Maud brings heaven into Betsy's consciousness then, for her mother has handed it to her on a platter by honoring her deepest desire: to be a writer!"

Fran Manushkin

These comments are just a sampling of the insightful thoughts MHL fans have brought to our online conversations. It's amazing to think that so many subjects and observations can be mined from a set of children's books! But as we continue to reread the books together, I think that many of us are rediscovering just why we love them so much, and what a gift Maud has given us. We'll share our thoughts on the "high school" books in the next B-T Journal, so take your books off your shelves or bedside tables and read along with us!

Julie Chuba

The Music of Betsy-Tacy

by Beth Hudson

As they tiptoed upstairs, the music became clearer. Mamie was playing a wistful waltz:

Tonight will never come again,
To you...and me.

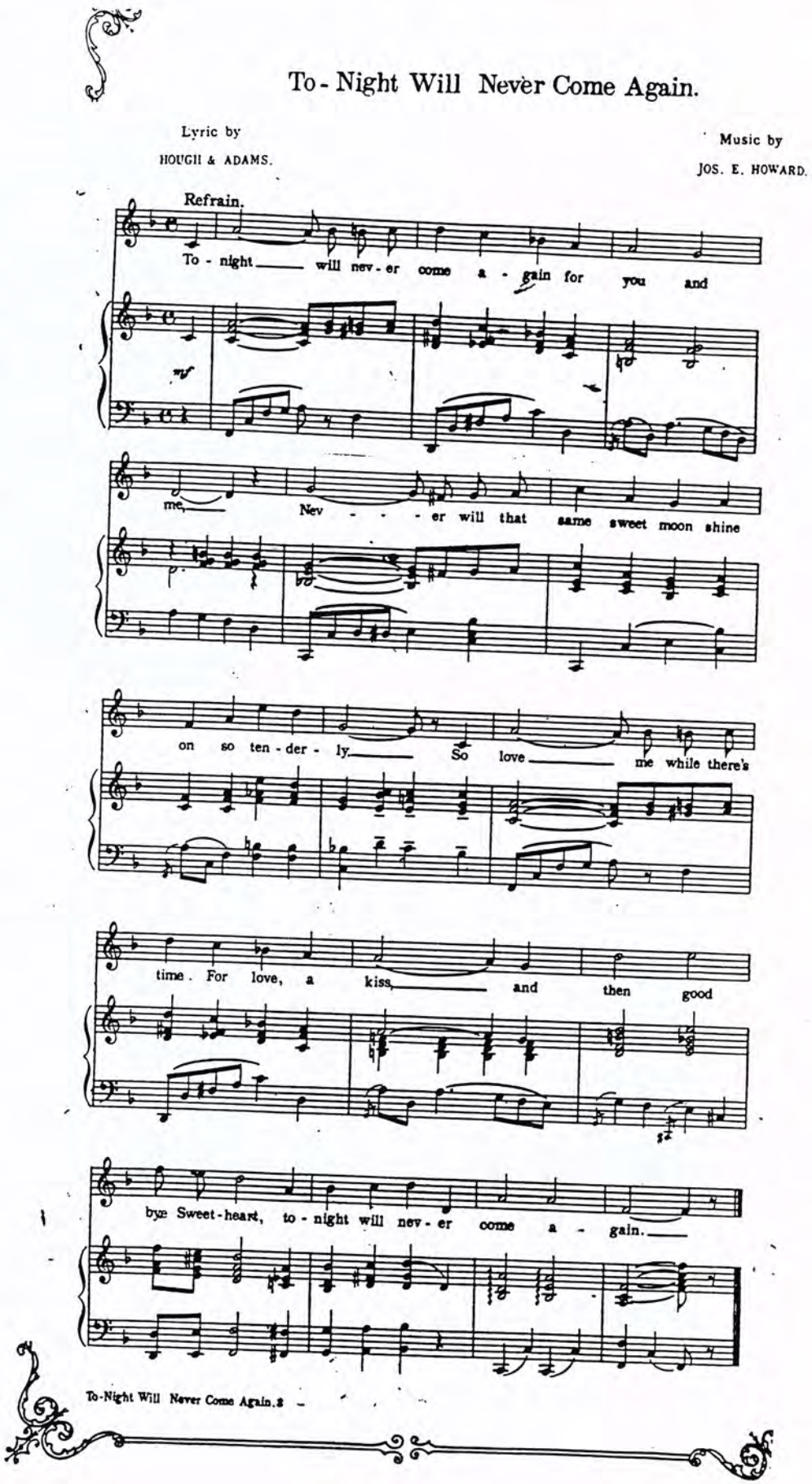
Betsy and Joe, Page 94

Boldly, Betsy, Joe, Tib and Dennie waltzed onto the dance floor, crashing the Junior Dance and were thrown out into the street for their efforts. *Tonight will never come again*...Mamie continued to play on the piano. "Let us hope not!" groaned Tib.

Tonight will never come again also foretold the exciting football victory Deep Valley celebrated over St. John, the stunning upset of the year. The crowd sang the song at dances, at school and at the game.

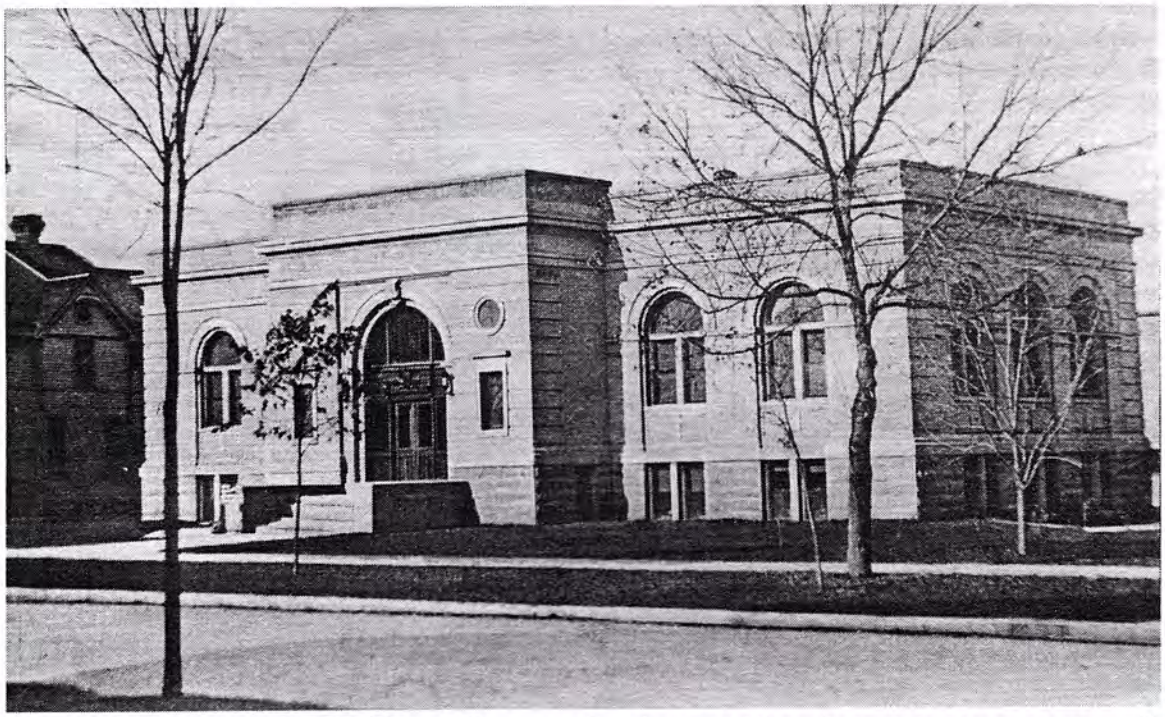
This song is from a popular musical of the time, *The Prince of Tonight,* written by Joseph E. Howard, author of so many other Betsy-Tacy favorites, including *What's the Use of Dreaming* and *Same Old Story. Tonight Will Never Come Again* was written in 1909 and the musical, *The Prince of Tonight*, included one other Betsy-Tacy hit: *I Wonder Who's Kissing her Now?*

Beth Hudson lives in Austin, Texas, and is a long-time contributor to this Journal.



From Our Photo Album

While you're in Mankato for the Convention, don't miss seeing the actual little glass pitcher that Bick gave to Maud. It's waiting for you in the Maud Hart Lovelace Wing of the Regional Library.



The Carnegie Library building of Maud's time still exists. It's the home of the Carnegie Arts Center now, but you'll walk up the same stairs that Maud did, enter, turn right, and find yourself in what was formerly the Children's Room.

Just look who stopped by the Southern California Chapter's Halloween Party!

Party-goers at the recent Southern California Halloween Party were delighted to see four young guests had come in costume, dressed as Betsy, Tacy, Tib, and Tom Slade! The guests are Ellie Perry, Hannah Olson, Maggie Sullivan, and Beth Dunstable, members of the Faithful Friends Doll Collection by Heidi Ott. You may read of their adventures in Sharla Whalen's new book, *Meet the Friends*, published by Abdo & Daughters. The book and the dolls can be found at Target stores. Here, the friends are checking out a large bowl of black licorice sticks, each festively tied with an orange ribbon.

Betsy-Tacy Society
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Please check either: Renewal ☐ New Member ☐

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____Extra donation for Tacy's House Fund in the amount of $_____

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 Blake, Post Office Box 206, North Easton, MA 02356

This license plate belongs to Arline Mues of Walnut, California. Besides being an active member in the Southern California Chapter of the Betsy-Tacy Society, she's the Keeper of the Cyberspace Crowd's Discussion Group List.

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