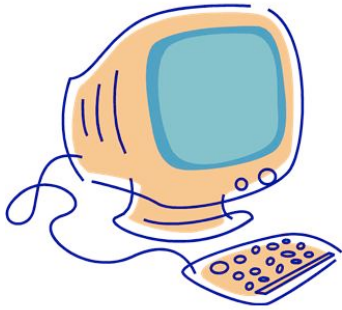


WHAT'S YOUR STORY, BETHANY HEGEDUS?



I was born in Bolingbrook, Illinois. Bolingbrook is a suburb of Chicago and is now considered a big town, but when I was a kid, Bolingbrook was nothing but cornfields. Oh, and there was a creek. I loved the creek. My brother and I would play there almost every day afterschool. He and his friends would play “War” and me and my friends would play “Little House on the Prairie.” Somehow, even though we girls didn’t like the boys and the boys didn’t like us girls, we always would end up running through the scrubby brush, chasing one another, and dodging crab apples as we played tag.

When I was twelve going on thirteen my family moved to Evans, Georgia. It was a big move. I missed Bolingbrook and my friends. I missed going to school with kids I knew my whole entire life, but eventually I grew to love Georgia.



Now that I am older, I’ve lived in lots of places: Phoenix, Arizona; Cherry Point, North Carolina; New York City, New York; and now Austin, Texas but Illinois (The Land of Lincoln) and Georgia (the home of the Georgia Peach) will always be home to me.

- **Did you have any bad or funny habits as a child?**

Okay, this is really gross and I can’t believe I am admitting it...but I always had long nails. They grow naturally. I never filed them (I still don’t) and when one of them broke off...I used to save them in a jar on my dresser. I wanted to glue them back on like Lee Press on nails, which were popular when I was a kid. I never did though.

Pretty weird, huh?

- **Any defining moments (good or bad) that shaped you as a child?**



When I was in 2nd grade my elementary school burnt to the ground. It happened on the last day of winter break. I was devastated. I loved school and I loved my 2nd grade teacher, Mrs. Sullivan. School was out for an additional week or two, while the school board figured out what to do. It was going to take over a year to rebuild Oak View Elementary! Well, the school board and the parents made a plan. We had split days for the rest of the year—the kids at North View Elementary went in the mornings and then the kids from Oak View went

to their school and used their classrooms in the afternoon. I was sad about my school burning down but I loved watching Lost in Space with my big brother, Joe, every day over our grilled cheese lunches. After Lost in Space, my mom would bundle us up in our snowsuits and off the three of us would go, headed off to go to school from 1pm to 6pm.

- **Did you play an instrument? Which one(s)?**

I played the cornet—which is similar to the trumpet, which Isaac, in Truth plays. The difference between the trumpet and the cornet has to do with the width of the cylindrical bore on each instrument. What’s a cylindrical bore? You got me! Let’s ask Maebelle—maybe it’s in her Little Known Facts book.

- **What did you want to be when you grew up?**

I wanted to be the first female President of the United States of America or I wanted to own the first female football league. Once I read about the suffragists and how women had fought for the right to vote, I wanted to be the first female anything!

- **What one thing can you tell readers that nobody knows?**

Maebelle is named after my grandma, Anna Mae, who went by Mae and my mom, whose maiden name is Bell. (My mom is short just like I am, and when she was in elementary school the kids called her Tinker Bell, since she was so tiny!)

- **Favorite pastime as a child?**

I loved to play Running Bases! The high school guys down the street would play catch and me and my friends would play running bases, running between them, whether they wanted us to or not.



- **If you weren't a writer, what would you like to be?**

If I weren't a writer, I'd be a singer. Well, I'd like to be a singer but like Maebelle I am not really musical. My voice kind of sounds like cats screeching or nails on a chalkboard, and it's not a pretty sound. But, if I could sing—if I had a beautiful voice like Granny does—that's what I'd want to do.

- **Do you listen to music while you write, or do you like silence?**

Nope. No music for me. Now that I live in Texas, I sometimes write in a café or coffee shop with friends. I used to write in an office (in a high rise building in New York City that overlooked the Brooklyn Bridge) on my lunch hour, but other than the sound of people talking or high heels ping-pinging on a polished floor I need quiet.

- **How many times do you have to revise? Do you love revision or hate it?**

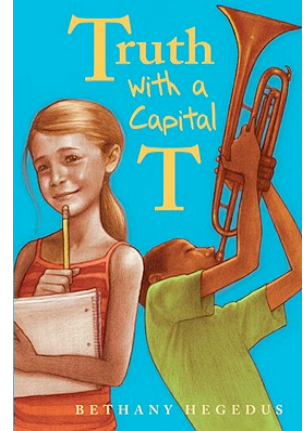
I revise a lot and I mean A LOT. I revise and revise and revise. I both love it and hate it. What I love about revision is I can shape and play and try, try, again. With writing, what you first put down on the page isn't supposed to be perfect. I like that. Nothing I ever do, or attempt to do, is perfect the first time around. Most days, revision makes me feel good.

But, then there are the days, where no matter what I write I don't like it. I feel like I am forcing a square into a triangle shaped hole. I try and try and try and the more I try, the worse the writing is. When that happens, I breathe. I count to ten and I trust that if I hit save and close the document I am working on, that when I come back to it—tomorrow or the next day—things will be better. The writing will be easier. The answer to whatever problem I am having will somehow, someday solve itself. Sometimes, that happens and sometimes it doesn't. Either way, writing to me is magic, and I like having a little magic in my life.

▪ **How long does it take you to write your books?**

*It takes me a long time to write my books. [Truth with a Capital T](#) took seven years from idea to hitting the bookshelves and *Between Us Baxters* took eight years. It's a good thing I am patient. That's a long, long time!*

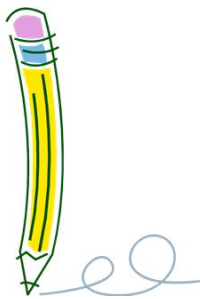
But, the one good thing about waiting that long to see a book come out, that when it does, that the characters I've created no longer feel like mine. They are outside of me now—there in between the covers of a book—and they feel like old friends. And, I love introducing them to young readers.



▪ **Do you have any children or pets and have you ever used them in a book?**

*Cotton, the basset hound, in *Truth with a Capital T* isn't the dog I had growing up but he reminds me of my childhood dog, Benji. Benji was a mutt and always there for me. I don't know how Benji did it but he always made me feel better about life. That is, when I wasn't wiping his slobber off my cheek when Benji went in for a kiss. Ewww!*

Quick Picks:



• **P & J or Mac and Cheese?**

Mac and Cheese! Totally!

• **Dog, Cat, Bird, or Fish?**

• *Dog! Or cat. Dog! Or Cat. A dog-cat, now that would be cool.*

• **Favorite or least favorite vegetable?**

Least favorite—brussel sprout. Most favorite—broccoli.

• **Early Bird Writer or Night Owl?**