

# Community Corner

## EMT: Popenfoose is on the loose in Syracuse

By MARK HUFFMAN  
Staff Writer

It's 2 a.m. when a shrill beeping sound calls out in the scarce still of the night at the Popenfoose residence on Lake Wawasee, Syracuse.

A doberman pinscher howls out, forming a duo with the source of the disruption, much in the way Bob Dylan may sound while trying to accompany Liberace on the piano.

Judy Popenfoose can be seen stumbling through the darkness, disrobing and reassembling as she treads a path towards the device that will force her into the cold winter air — an isotone hanging near the livingroom fireplace.

"Thank goodness for velcro shoes," the weary emergency medical technician quipped while dispelling smoke from a cigarette and recounting a previous night's activities.

### Profile

Such nights have become commonplace for Popenfoose, who began a second "career" as an EMT six years ago — after her son had died from gunshot wounds. "Syracuse didn't have the EMT service at the time and I'd always wondered if I'd known more about emergency techniques if I could have saved my son," the remorseful Popenfoose reasoned.

Almost six months passed before the grieving mother recoiled and decided to take basic life support classes, offered in North Webster at the time. "My husband urged me to become an EMT after I completed the course and got my certification, saying 'you may as well get some use out of it,'" Popenfoose reflected.

She has gotten plenty use out of the classes since an inaugural run in 1980, answering over one-hundred calls during the past six years.

"We've gotten several crazy calls — many of which are 'unprintable,'" Popenfoose said, laughing and rolling her eyes heavenward as she thought back to the times the ambulance was called only to serve as a comic relief.

However, the bulk of the calls are serious, with heart problems causing the isotone to go off the majority of the time. "I've gotten to the point where I can tell the seriousness of the call by the tone of the dispatcher's voice," Popenfoose remarked.

Nevertheless, even when prepared for the worst there's always something worse that preparation can't take the place of. "Deaths are always the hardest to deal with," the senior EMT remarked, shadow-dancing with her emotions.

"I'll never forget one instance in which we were called out for a crib death and I had to carry the baby out of the house — I just cried," she said, revealing that she too was human.

"It's hard to shrug off a death, you get a little more understanding about it after going to so many accidents but you never get completely over it. I still question 'Why?' when I'm involved with a death," Popenfoose added.

Her admiration for people has kept her in a job most people abort after a few years. "You have to like people, I'm not in it for the money," Popenfoose, who spends her "off" time working the third shift with her husband at Syracuse Rubber Products, admitted.

That job, coupled with the duty of aiding area residents, leaves Popenfoose little time for sleep.

"I've been awakened by the isotone more times than I care to remember," she admitted, adding, "I've also had calls while working at the rubber plant — they're more considerate about letting me leave than most places would be."

At times Popenfoose leaves the plant in such a hurry that she often forgets what she's leaving behind. "One time I took the truck and left my husband behind in sub-zero weather, luckily my son made sure he made it home without freezing," she said, laughing about the instance, which her husband hadn't found so humorous at the time. This inconvenience along with several others leaves one to wonder whether Popenfoose can enjoy an actual family life.

"They are real understanding about it," Popenfoose said of the clan, who's main family activity is making sure she gets to the ambulance after a call. "We can't really plan anything in advance, due to the fact that I can be called in at any time."

Popenfoose got an early taste of the EMT lifestyle as a child, growing up in Goshen. "My father was a mechanic and I always bugged him to let me ride in the wrecker to accidents," she said, adding, "Finally he gave in, and the first accident I went to involved the death of a woman — after that I didn't want anything to do with it."

Despite her early dissuasion, Popenfoose can often be seen touring the streets of Syracuse, where she's lived since the age of 14, in an EMT ambulance. "My mother still doesn't believe it," she exclaimed. However, many of the town's residents are thankful of the transition. "Most of the people appreciate the service we (EMTs) provide and I've even had some come up to me on the street and talk," Popenfoose said, adding with a wry smile, "Of course a lot of times I just look at them with a blank look on my face, since I usually don't know who they are."

Outward dislike towards the profession also is evident among area residents as, in one humorous incident, she explained, "I was in a Syracuse drugstore one time and a little boy came up to me with his hands on his hips and shouted 'I don't like you.'" Evidently the youth had taken one too many trips in the EMT ambulance.

Less humorous incidents occur when on the road, according to Popenfoose. "A lot of times people will get angry when they see an EMT ambulance going down the road because it's slowing them down," she stated in a resonant tone, adding, "Maybe they'd have more respect if it was their home, or someone's home that they know, that we were going to or coming from."

Victims can also be maddening according to the veteran EMT. "I've had people tell me 'if you touch me I'll sue you,' and, regrettably, we can't touch them," Popenfoose said, adding with a smile, "But, once they pass out we go to work — just like in the old 'Emergency' series on television."

However, unlike the "Emergency" shows, Syracuse EMTs are often limited in what they are allowed to do, causing frustration on the part of the technician. "We cannot administer medication orally or intravenously and aren't even allowed to use the Life Pack (defibrillator) that we carry in the ambulance," Popenfoose stated, adding in a sobering tone, "There are times where we could've saved a person if we were allowed to start an IV."

Despite the limitations Popenfoose has endured during her six years, she still remains. "I've said I'm going to quit a lot of times, but never do."

One incident that would have caused many to quit happened to her while transporting an accident victim three years ago when a man proceeded to expel his food directly in Popenfoose face. "The man



VITAL SIGNS — Syracuse resident Judy Popenfoose, right, checks her daughter's (eight-year-old Michele) reflexes while examining the equipment in her "second home" — an emergency transport vehicle.

Popenfoose has been a certified Emergency Medical Technician for the town of Syracuse for the past six years. (Photo by Mark Huffman)

must have eaten a whole package of hot dogs, vomiting five times on the way to the hospital."

Frankly, one furter is too many for Popenfoose now, who has been tagged "hot dog" by her cohorts. "I haven't eaten a hot dog since," she said, curling her nose at the thought.

The hot dog has also gone home with what she may wish was just ketchup more than a few times. "I've walked into my house covered from head to foot with blood a lot of times," she remarked, often causing her eight-year-old daughter to run into another room.

"She's petrified of blood, I don't know how I got stuck with this kid," Popenfoose laughed.

While the "kid" has grown used to her mother's demanding profession, Popenfoose admits there was a time when she also grew tired of it. "The only time I heard her grumble was one day when we were in the toy department of a store and the buzzer went off, then we went to eat after that and it buzzed again. Finally the tone went off a third time when she was in the middle of an ice cream cone, causing her to look up at me and exclaim, 'Oh, no mommy, not again.'

Popenfoose also gets her fill of the calls at times. "Whenever the pressure really gets to me I just tell the 'old man' to get the Harley out," she commented, referring to the 1981 Harley Davidson in the garage which already has 120,000 miles on the odometer, thanks mainly to Popenfoose's stressful profession.

But when she isn't riding the Harley, Popenfoose may be seen plugging for a new ambulance for Syracuse. "We really need another ambulance, as well as more people," she said. Seventeen individuals currently make up the Syracuse EMT crew. "With a new nursing home being built in the area, a larger EMT operation is vital to the town," she added.

That added crew and another ambulance may make a difference between life or death for some individual, according to the EMT. "While we've made progress in the last few years we still have a long way to go," she exclaimed, still baring the grief of her dead son and the burden of a necessary profession.

### Judy Moser attends seminar

Judy Moser, Syracuse, of Creative Touch Studio, attended the January 6 Michiana Professional Photographers Training Seminar in South Bend where Master of Photography CPP, Richard Voohees, Logansport, was the guest speaker. Among his awards is the Master of Photography received in 1985.

Voohees' 15 years of experience has brought him over 100 local, state and national awards including the P.P.A. Loan Collection. In 1984 he was "Photographer of the Year" at the MPPI First Print Competition.

Students under his instruction learned composition using line, form, color texture to control attention and direction. He demonstrated the use of elements around that are available and easy to use with creativity in mind. His photography and teachings are contemporary, bold and dynamic.

Mrs. Moser is a member of MMPI.

The Twilighters Bunco Club members met in a local restaurant for their Christmas dinner recently. During the evening new officers were presented. They are:

President — Mrs. Charles (Nancy) Seafoss

Secretary-treasurer — Mrs. Billy (Grace) Eyer

Mrs. Stanley (Bessie) Grimes, received the birthday gift and Mrs. Gene (Maryrose) Henning, was presented the anniversary gift.

Members participated in a gift exchange with the revealing of Secret Pals for 1985 and the drawing of new ones for 1986.

Gifts were presented to the outgoing officers from the club. There were 14 members and eight substitutes present for the evening.

Mrs. Gerald (Pat) Bitner will host the January meeting in her home with Margaret Whitehead as the co-hostess.

Hosting the open house will be: Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth (Ruthann) Grove, Breman; Nancy Summers, Middlebury; Mr. and Mrs. Tom (Edna) VanDiepenbos, New Paris; and Mr. and Mrs. Richard (Kathy) VanDiepenbos, Syracuse. The couple's grandchildren will also participate in the family celebration.



### Cherie Martin hostess for Primary Moms

Cherie Martin was hostess for the Monday, Jan. 6, meeting of the Syracuse Primary Mother's Club. Nancy Luensmann, president, opened the meeting with a prayer.

The secretary's report was presented by Sue White and Georgia Lemberg, treasurer, gave a financial report. Cherie Martin reported on the club's Christmas basket project.

A Christmas party given for member's children was read by Cindy Mullins, chairwoman, as written by Mrs. White. Santa was present at the party to entertain the children and hand out presents.

The group conducted a discussion on having a couples party. Cathy Shaw will be checking on the details and give a report at the next meeting.

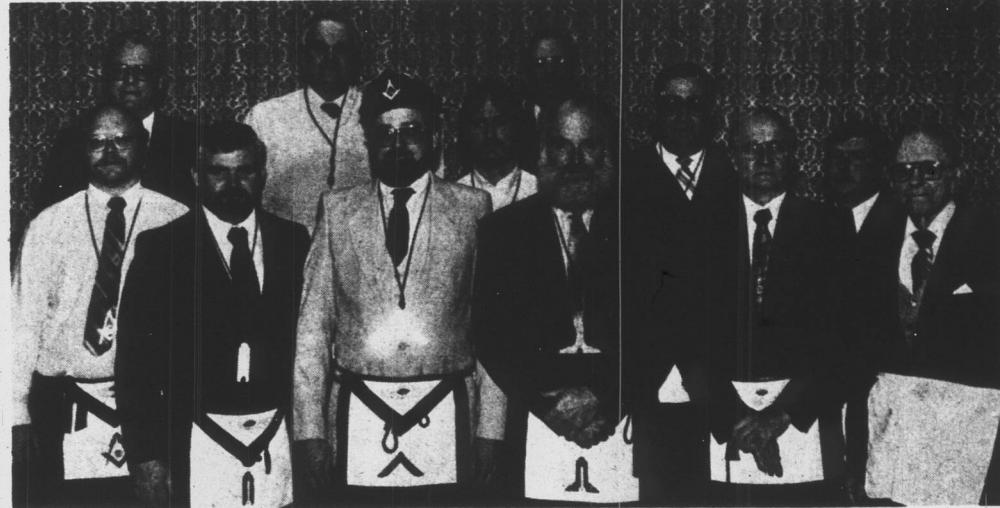
Soft drinks and cake, sent by Betty Lotter, were served to 17 members by Judy Kausel, co-hostess. The next meeting will be in the home of Terri Caldwell, Monday, Jan. 20. There will be door prizes presented.

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NEW OFFICERS — Pictured are the new officers at the Masonic Lodge in Syracuse. Installation was held on Friday night.

In front, from left to right, are Larry Weaver, Jr., senior deacon; Leonard Kline, junior warden; Ken Pliker, worshipful master; Richard Pliker, senior warden; George Gardner, tyler; and George ("Bob") Heaton, installing officer.

In back are Bob Hurd, installing marshal; Carl Boles, treasurer; Richard Krull, junior deacon; Dave Griffith, secretary; Jack Elam, steward; and Floyd Murphy, installing chaplain.

### Kiwanians learn of Tough Love

Ruth Ann Angle, counselor at Wawasee High School, spoke to members of the Wawasee Kiwanis Club Saturday, Jan. 4, about the Tough Love Support Group for parents who have problems with teenagers. The problems may be of various kinds such as, alcohol, drugs, or rebellion. The local group is small, starting with a couple who had been attending a group in



#### COMPETE FOR MISS JUNIOR INDIANA

Heather Byrd, daughter of Brenda Byrd, 613 S. Main St., Syracuse, has been selected as an entrant in the 1986 Little Miss Junior Indiana Pageant. This state event will select Indiana's representative to the Little Miss Junior America National Pageant staged at the Sheraton Bal Harbour, Miami Beach, Fla. The Little Miss Junior America National Pageant will be presented in October.

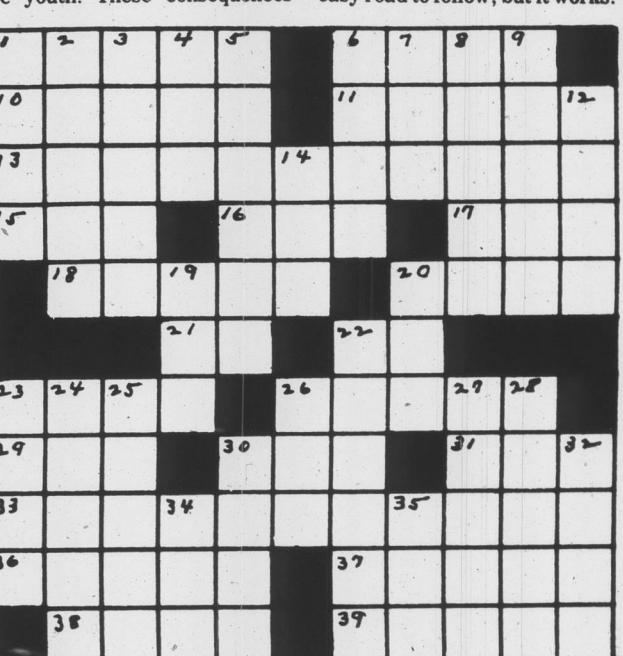
Miss Byrd, who was selected as an entrant-at-large will be competing with girls from all over Indiana from for the title of Little Miss Junior America. She attends Syracuse Elementary School and is a member of the Creative Arts Club. She enjoys roller skating and gymnastics.

#### Large tub

The bathtub of basketball star Wilt Chamberlain holds 20 times more water than a normal tub.

#### Recorder

The video cassette recorder was invented in 1961.



**ACROSS:**  
1 Talk falsely about  
2 Opinions  
3 Dan or Pat  
4 Blunder  
5 Ambassador  
6 Skinny stick  
7 Illuminated  
8 Sports building  
9 Racehorse  
12 Storage structure  
14 Officeholders  
19 Knack  
20 Vehicle  
22 Parsonages  
23 Dessert favorite  
24 Floating  
25 Be aware of  
26 Public vehicle  
27 Make joyful  
28 Estimator  
30 Stripe  
32 Swiss city  
34 Understand  
35 Make lace

**DOWN:**  
1 Falls behind  
2 Opinions  
3 Dan or Pat  
4 Blunder  
5 Ambassador  
6 Skinny stick  
7 Illuminated  
8 Sports building  
9 Racehorse  
12 Storage structure  
14 Officeholders  
19 Knack  
20 Vehicle  
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25 Be aware of  
26 Public vehicle  
27 Make joyful  
28 Estimator  
30 Stripe  
32 Swiss city  
34 Understand  
35 Make lace

(Answers on page 15)

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