

# CONTACT

PIONEER CLUBS

SPRING 2006

When Peggy Jones and Nancy Walker joined the staff of Pioneer

Clubs (then Pioneer Girls) in the 1960s, it was a time rocked with social change. Teenagers felt the church was behind the times when it came to the issues they faced everyday. So Pioneer Girls responded with some changes of its own, including a renewed effort to train adults to minister to the changing needs of children.



*Nancy Walker in 1986.*



*Peggy Jones in 1986.*

*Peggy Jones and Nancy Walker*

## Longtime Pioneer Clubs Staff Members Retire

Part of this training emphasis involved the establishment of North Star Leadership Training Center in northern Michigan. Peggy Jones, a school secretary and Pioneer Girls® leader from Kansas, offered to spend the summer of 1965 helping out at the center, which offered comprehensive courses designed to equip adults to help young people develop Christian values. Peggy worked as secretary, taking on-site registrations, making trips into town, and serving as a jack-of-all-trades.

Another facet of Pioneer Girls' training emphasis in the 1960's involved the development of the ministry's fleet of field representatives—women who traveled their territories conducting leader-training workshops, visiting prospective churches, and speaking at church awards ceremonies and events. Nancy Walker, a former public school teacher and a Wheaton college graduate, became a field representative for Pioneer Girls in 1961 and was assigned to Indiana and western Michigan. Throughout her time as a field representative, Nancy also directed Camp Cherith camps in Michigan, Illinois, Texas, and Maryland.

While Nancy was still putting between 1,000 and 1,500 miles a month on her car traveling back roads in Indiana and Michigan, Peggy took a job at Pioneer Girls national headquarters, then in downtown Wheaton, Illinois. As administrative assistant to the field director, one of Peggy's first assignments was to become acquainted with field work by visiting Nancy in Grand Rapids, Michigan. "That was my introduction into field work, so I could see what my job entailed," Peggy remembers.

As a field representative, Nancy was part of the 25th anniversary covered-wagon tour. Field reps took turns towing, by car, a huge covered wagon across the country, visiting various churches and camps along the way. The trip started in the west, and by the time it got to Nancy



*The Pioneer Girls covered wagon toured the United States in 1964. It was winter when Nancy Walker pulled the wagon through her Michigan territory.*

in Michigan, it was winter. "I needed to back the wagon into a driveway so it wouldn't block traffic," Nancy remembers. "There was a lot of snow and I got stuck across the road. No traffic could get by until someone helped me back it into the driveway."

Nancy eventually left Pioneer Clubs to return to teaching, but she rejoined the ministry in 1980, this time linking up with Peggy and the rest of the national headquarters staff in Wheaton. "I was an administrative assistant type," Nancy remembers.

Both Nancy's and Peggy's job responsibilities expanded and evolved over the years. Nancy stepped up to become the resident typesetter, and she also handled editing for the publications department. In 1993, she became executive administrative assistant to Virginia Patterson, who by that time had been named president of Pioneer Clubs. Since Virginia's retirement in 1996, Nancy has served the current president, Judy Bryson, in the same capacity.

Peggy's Pioneer Clubs career also evolved over the years, shifting

*continued on page 2*

# Clubs Celebrate Pioneer Clubs Sunday

Pioneer Clubs Sunday is an opportunity for club members to shine by serving and sharing with their church congregations. Here is how several churches celebrated their Pioneer Clubs Sunday event:

Club members at **Centro Evangelistico Magdiel in Laredo, Texas**, participated in a worship service by ushering and reciting Bible verses. Children received their first award badges, displayed on new sashes. Adult volunteers were also recognized.

Wearing their Pioneer Clubs T-shirts, club members at **Suffield Fellowship Church in Suffield, Ohio**, greeted worshippers and distributed bulletins. A slide presentation illustrated club activities while club coordinator Kristy Phillips and some of the club members talked about club. The congregation took a special offering for the national work of Pioneer Clubs. In addition, club members drew pictures of their favorite club activities, and these were hung in various areas of the church.

At **Varnell United Methodist Church**

*“Celebrate” continued on page 3*

# Touching Young Lives

The executive committee of the Pioneer Clubs board of directors opened with our usual devotional and prayer, and then one of the members had something to share. For the next several minutes, a meeting intended to focus on the business and management side of Pioneer Clubs focused instead on the ministry side, which continues to touch the hearts and lives of children and adults across North America.

The “problem” started when a church family invited their daughter’s classmate, and her brother, to Pioneer Clubs. These children, Erin and Austin (not their real names), had come to live with an aunt and uncle who are now their legal guardians.

After Erin and Austin’s arrival, club was not the same. Chaos replaced order. “Regular” club members were not at all sure they liked having someone who didn’t always follow directions in their club. Erin, a third grader, presented questions, complaints and a need for attention. It was not unusual for her to run out of the room and hide. Before long, at least one adult was on “Erin Alert” to follow her and bring her back to her group.

Sympathy for Erin and Austin’s home situation wore thin. Club leaders and committee members were praying, as were several women in the church’s morning Bible study.

A fellow Pioneer Clubs board member and his wife, who had a daughter in

Erin’s group, talked with their daughter about being a friend, showing Jesus’ love, and just being kind. They prayed as a family, as did other parents and daughters. That was in October.

The club’s early winter craft project involved decorating T-shirts. With the intensity of a young Picasso, Erin focused on her shirt design. Club leaders patiently helped and encouraged Erin and the other girls until each T-shirt could be put aside to dry.

For Erin, this turned out to be much more than just another craft project. For this frequently unruly third grader, it became a silent, yet bold, statement of what she was learning—a proclamation of what she was applying to her own life situation. Tears came to my eyes as we heard about Erin’s finished T-shirt. It was a testimony to the power of prayer, consistency, and compassion—and a testimony to the character of Pioneer Clubs.

The message on Erin’s T-shirt showed that she was catching on. She was listening, and she was responding to the kindness of her peers. Hers were baby growth steps, but very significant ones. On her T-shirt was a big red heart that simply said, “Jesus Loves Mom.”

*Sharen Rose is Vice Chair for Pioneer Clubs’ Board of Directors. Her long-time involvement in Pioneer Clubs includes the roles of club member, club leader, workshop leader, and former staff member. Sharen has also served as executive director for Huron Forest Camp Cherith®.*



*By Sharen Rose*

## Retire *continued from cover*

from assisting the field director to overseeing the ministry’s administrative services and serving as liaison to Camp Cherith camps. Peggy also served as corporate secretary for many years.

In addition to the evolution of their own work responsibilities, both women have seen substantial change and growth in the ministry as

a whole, including the addition of clubs for boys, a name change, moves to new buildings, and a host of curriculum changes. Yet the aim of the Pioneer Clubs ministry has remained firmly rooted throughout its history, Peggy points out. “In 40 years there have been a lot of changes,” she says. “But our philosophy hasn’t changed: Christ in every aspect of life.”

*Would you like to give an honor gift to Pioneer Clubs in recognition of Peggy and/or Nancy’s commitment to serving children? Simply indicate this on the enclosed reply slip and enclose it with your gift!*

## PIONEER CLUBS’ MISSION

*To serve God by providing the most effective and educationally sound programs to help children follow Christ in every aspect of life.*

# Your Contingency Notebook

In the Winter, 2006 issue of *inContact*, we began an article on how to compile a "contingency notebook," a three-hole binder containing all the information a loved one or personal representative needs to know should you become seriously incapacitated or die. This issue, we pick up where we left off, with step eight:

- 8. Funeral Instructions.** Identify your wishes concerning the funeral service and burial. You might also suggest Pioneer Clubs for those who wish to make a memorial gift in your honor.
- 9. Estate Planning Documents.** Include copies of your will, power of attorney, living will or directive to physicians, trusts, and other items. Also, specify where the original of each document can be found.
- 10. Charitable Commitments.** Summarize your charitable involvements, including your ties with Pioneer Clubs. This will help your family know what organizations you supported during life, and why.
- 11. Personal Items.** Include biographical information that can be used in preparing your obituary. Summarize your values and purpose in life. You might also provide personal notes to each family member expressing your love and your hopes for them.
- 12. Miscellaneous.** This section is reserved for anything that doesn't fall into one of the other categories.

For the sake of your loved ones, we encourage you to get started with your contingency book right away. Keep working on it until you are satisfied it is complete. Then show it to your family and tell them where they can find it. All of this will produce peace of mind for you and for them.

Valencia A. Breckenridge, our director of development, is available to assist you and to provide further ideas if you wish. You can reach her at 800-694-2582 ext. 5729.



*"Celebrate"* continued on page 3

in **Varnell, Georgia**, the entire club participated in a Sunday worship service. Voyager Club members passed out bulletins. Skippers and Scooters sang a song while Pathfinder Club members used sign language. Trailblazer Club members helped serve communion.

**Whiting Bible Church in Whiting, New Jersey**, had to reschedule their Pioneer Clubs Sunday celebration when church services were cancelled by a blizzard bringing more than a foot of snow. Members of their club, which is new and small but growing quickly,

were introduced to the congregation and awarded their badges. Reports Club Coordinator Nanci Duffy, "It was a chance to let the people know that we are really alive and well and growing."

**New Beginnings Assembly of God in Republic, Ohio**, began their Pioneer Clubs Sunday celebration with a contest to design the church bulletin cover. Club members greeted members of the congregation as they entered the worship service. During the service, each club level was recognized, and a slide show featuring pictures taken throughout the club year was featured.

## In Honor of...

**Judy Bryson**  
Sandi VanderKooi

**Mary Hackman**  
Mildred McConnell

**Austin Jinbo**  
Denise L. Self

**Trudy Lamb**  
Brenda Champagne

**Virginia Patterson**  
Susan Price  
Dave and Sharen Rose  
Dee and Ron Netzel

**Sharen Rose**  
Joyce E. Hunt

**Nancy Walker**  
Virginia Patterson  
Gary and Charlyene Wall

## In Loving Memory of...

**Virginia Anderson**  
Mildred McConnell

**Shirley Birch**  
Elwood and Lorraine  
Phy

**Ruby Caffrey**  
Sandi Vanderkooi

**Priscilla Dollard**  
Kenneth and Kathy  
Hahn

**Mary Dorn**  
John and Mary Tilley

**Edith Egan**  
Gary and Rebecca  
Jones  
Peggy Jones  
Mr. and Mrs.  
Donald Tuter

**Lorraine Gerber**  
Earl Alwes  
Mary Bechtel  
James and Ruth Beeler  
Carolyn Blossom  
Judy Bryson  
Roy and Marie  
Comstock  
Howard and Lena  
Duncan  
Donald and Starr  
Frederick  
Valerie French  
Charles Gerber  
Steven and Deborah  
Gottlieb

John and Dorothy  
Gration  
Donald and Marilyn  
Gruner  
Jeffrey and Kelly Gruner  
Rosamond Gruner  
Sue Gruner  
Mary Hackman  
Gay Hawkins  
Bud and Jane Hutchins  
Peggy Jones  
Alfred and Ruth Lissy  
Leonard Mann  
Mike and Cheri  
Mahoney  
Frances Price  
Virginia Patterson  
Mary Radcliff  
Sara Robertson  
Allen and Phyllis Roos  
Jack and Carol Tipre  
TriSpan Health Services  
Michael Turco  
Sandi VanderKooi  
Gary and Charlyene Wall

**Henry Field**  
Valencia Breckenridge  
Mary Hackman  
Peggy Jones  
Sara Robertson  
Sandi Vander Kooi

**Dale O. Jones**  
Peggy Jones  
William and Alice VanTil

**Jill Jones**  
Charles and Sally Andre  
Robert and Bess  
Archibald  
Carolyn Blossom  
Valencia Breckenridge  
Judy Bryson  
Barry and Lynn Guise  
Mary Hackman  
Carol Jewett  
Gary and Rebecca  
Jones  
Peggy Jones  
Zondra Lindblade  
Ramona Lockhart  
Muriel Naudts  
Virginia Patterson  
Janet Peluso  
Susan Price  
Clara Rafajko  
Sara Robertson  
Sandi Vander Kooi  
Gary and Charlyene Wall  
Leona Wonnell

**Mildred C. Phy**  
Elwood and Lorraine  
Phy

**Loren Rader Jr.**  
Gary and Rebecca  
Jones  
Peggy Jones  
Mr. and Mrs. Donald  
Tuter

**Alison Short Miles**  
Mary Hackman  
Peggy Jones  
Virginia Patterson  
David and Elizabeth  
Randles  
Sara Robertson  
David and Sharen Rose  
William and Alyce VanTil

**Shawn Lee Tracey**  
Grace Bonnama

**Barbara Zimmerman**  
Charles and Ruth  
Masters  
Elma Rittersbach  
William and Alyce VanTil

# Showers of Blessings

A few years ago, one of the teens in my church teamed up with a Pioneer Clubs veteran leader to lead the Pathfinder Club. Even though Anne was just a senior in high school, club members saw her as an adult and equal with her co-leader.

Throughout the year, I made a point of asking Anne how things were going with her club leadership experience. She would always give me a big smile and tell me something about what they were doing. Sometimes we'd laugh a little at something the club members said or did.

I always tried to affirm Anne's willingness to help with club. From conversations I had with her coleader, I knew she was doing a good job and that the kids loved having her as one of their leaders. I also learned that she took her leadership responsibilities seriously.

At Christmastime, when I asked Anne how her Pioneer Clubs experience was going, she beamed with joy and lifted up a gift bag saying, "I even got a present." The bag held a Christmas gift from one of her club members. We talked about how nice it was for a child to remember her in this special way at Christmas.

As I thought about Anne's club experience, I couldn't help but be reminded that there are so many wonderful benefits to ministering to children. The smiles from eager kids coming to church for a good time. The opportunity to guide them as they learn new skills during activity awards. The experience of joy when they understand how the verse they are memorizing applies to

their daily life. The privilege of sharing your faith and having a part in their spiritual development. These are just a few of the joys that come directly from being a Pioneer Clubs leader, or indirectly from financially supporting the Pioneer Clubs ministry.

Our call to share the Good News of Jesus with children should not be taken lightly. We are entrusted with two very important things in our Pioneer Clubs ministry. First, we are commissioned to teach God's Word faithfully.

Next, we are to respect and value the children God sends our way. I believe that as we do these two things, God will reward and bless our efforts in ways we can't even imagine.

As leaders meet weekly with the children God sends to their Pioneer Clubs ministry, they remember how Jesus treated little ones: He welcomed them, took them in his arms, and blessed them. What a powerful image! I

trust it will encourage and inspire you as you interact with the children in your life. And I hope it gives you a clearer vision of what happens when you financially support the ministry of Pioneer Clubs. As my friend Anne reminded me, sometimes you get a special present you don't even expect!

*I will send down showers in season; there will be showers of blessing (Ezekiel 34:26b).*



Judy Bryson

Judy Bryson  
President



inCONTACT  
SPRING 2006

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This year marks Judy Bryson's 35th year of service to the Pioneer Clubs ministry. Through the years, Judy has served as typist, field representative, camp director, vice president of marketing, and, since 1996, president. We thank God for her passion for children and her devoted service!