

# The Life of Maggie Newman

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Mrs. Maggie Newman had some unusual jobs in her early life. She was a housemother for a Greeley sorority, the driver of a catering truck, a receptionist, even a cocktail waitress! However, her most fascinating and memorable job was as a school bus driver.

At the time, her husband drove a school bus. They had three kids and needed a second source of income. When she applied for the job, she did a written driving test. After she passed that, they stuck her in the bus and had her drive around the parking lot. Mrs. Newman had no trouble with that—the bus’s controls were just like those of the Volkswagen she drove, only a lot bigger.

The job certainly had its ups and downs. One particularly hard spot was when she was a substitute driver for a junior high school. There was a railroad crossing on her route at the top of a hill. After she stopped to listen for trains, she couldn’t get over the tracks! She was stuck! All the kids in the back were yelling as she tried again and again to get the vehicle moving. Finally, she lurched across the tracks and delivered the children home safely. Another disaster occurred when she was driving a route along the Platte River. The bus was caught in a furious hailstorm. Tiny balls of ice were flying everywhere, making it nearly impossible to see. Miraculously, she managed to steer the cumbersome vehicle through three inches of hail and deliver all the kids home to safety.

Mrs. Newman’s favorite part of her job was the children. She drove kids of all ages, from preschool to high school. She says that to be a successful bus driver you have to be, “Part insane and a psychologist.” You always get the kids at their worst: when they’re tired and cranky in the morning and when they’re tired and cranky after a long day of school. However, they could get pretty exciting, like the time that one kid brought a big snake on the bus in a pillowcase. Her favorite age group was the preschoolers, who were excited to be in school for the first time and very polite to the driver.

Unfortunately, not all the students were as polite as the preschoolers. One winter, as she was driving out of the school parking lot, Mrs. Newman was hit in the back of the head with a snowball. She immediately stopped, turned around in her seat, and said, “Whoever threw that, get off and walk home or you all get off and walk home.” The culprit, the son of another bus driver, slouched off the bus, and she continued on her route as if nothing had happened.

Like many people of her generation, Mrs. Maggie Newman’s life is considerably more exciting than it may sound. Hopefully, their stories will not be lost, and this wealth of information and drama will live on forever.