

A Volkswagen and a School Bus

The Profile of Maggie Newman- Bus Driver!

By Jack Ryan

People don't really ever think much of school bus drivers. A school bus driver is just someone who picks the kids up and drops them off, right? No. This is the tale of Maggie Newman, a fantastic school bus driver.

One fine day, Mrs. Newman found herself driving her beloved Volkswagen Beetle (She loved Volkswagen Beetles of all kinds), to an interview for a new job as a school bus driver. She parked her car and went into the interview. The interviewer was happy with her, and had her drive him around the block one time. He believed that the system of the Beetle was quite similar to that of the bus. She was hired!

But the man neglected to notice a few differences: The first was that the bus was a considerably larger vehicle than the tiny Beetle. She was driving a Behemoth! The bus also operated on a 2-speed drive, so she had to become accustomed to double-shifting.

On the job, she had to be a substitute driver quite a bit, but one day she received a call that terrified her: She had to drive Junior High students, the scariest bunch of the age groups. On the route, she realized that she would have to cross a railroad track at the top of a steep hill! As every respectable bus driver should know, you must stop at railroad crossings. She got up her courage and tried her hardest to start up the hill.

"Hey, Mrs. Newman, why don't you grind up a pound for us, too?" said a student teasingly, referring to the grinding sound the bus made as Mrs. Newman tried to start.

Another terrifying incident occurred while she drove over the Platte River. As she crossed the huge river, hail began to fall. Not just a tiny hailstorm, but a ferocious one. Mrs. Newman knew she had to keep her control. She had 60 young lives depending on her ability to drive. Of course, the courageous bus driver pulled through on three inches of hail.

Mrs. Newman is now in her 70's, and she claims that what made it worthwhile to drive a bus through hail and fog and to take on her fear of Jr. High students, was just the kids. She loved watching the kids grow up. She especially enjoyed preschoolers. They followed directions instantly, seeing as they were new to the world of buses. They got on perfectly and got off with little disturbance.

So, although we may not see it all the time, bus drivers play a big part in our schools, and have to be very brave, even if they did come from the small beginning of a Volkswagen Beetle.