



Madge Olson mentioned a statement often heard when she told people that she drives a bus. “How can you stand all that noise?” Madge drove five routes a day, and had been a driver since 1966, according to the article, *Drivers in Skirts Handle Local School Bus Duties*, **Shakopee Valley News**, April 4, 1973 . Shirley Marek explained that you learn to block out the noise. The fall and spring are the worst times for noise, according to the ladies, and the night runs are always noisier than the morning.

Kay Grimme said you had to have a feeling for kids and be a “patient person,” according to the article.

Responsibility plays a big part of a bus drivers’ job. In 1973, there are approximately 200 persons who travel on any one particular bus per day, and a bus driver had the responsibility of getting these students to and from school safely.

The bus drivers agreed that the parents could help a driver out. Teaching preschoolers how to sit down on a bus, rather than stand on the seats or in the aisle would insure a safer trip for all.



Other drivers posed another problem to the bus drivers. It seemed that some people just don’t have the time to be behind a bus for a short distance, and will pass on the shoulder when buses are stopped at railroad crossing, or hurry through a stop sign to get ahead of a bus.

Bus drivers were required to have a special license which meant a test and physical exam. There were no other special required courses or schooling in 1973. Some of the drivers did participate in a workshop sponsored by the Traffic and Safety Center at Mankato State College held at the Chaska Senior High during March of 1973, according to *Drivers in Skirts Handle Local School Bus Duties*, **Shakopee Valley News**, April 4, 1973.



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**Agatha Margaret
Mickey Barlau
Baden
Bus Driver in 1973**



When that big orange school bus rolls up and the door swings open, there's a pretty good chance the person behind the wheel will be a woman, according to the **Shakopee Valley News** on April 4, 1973.

Peter Sterbonic and Norb Schmitt, owners and operators of Shakopee Services, the Shakopee School buses, employ five women drivers in addition to eight men drivers to transport 1400 students daily in Shakopee in 1973. Four of the women are six year veterans at the helm of a 60 or 66 passenger bus: Mickey Baden, Shirley Marek, Madge Olson, and Grace Schmitt. The newest addition to the group is Kay Grimme.



Mickey Barlau Baden was one of five women who were bus drivers for the schools in Shakopee in 1973. The picture on the left is from the *Shakopee Valley News* on April 4, 1973. The article, called *Drivers in Skirts Handle Local School Bus Duties*, the five women bus drivers were Shirley Marek, Madge Olson, Grace Schmitt, Kay Gimme, and Mickey Barlau Baden.

Kay Grimme drove the 15 passenger mini-bus for special education students from Lydia, St. Joe, and Glen Lake. When she announced her decision to drive a bus, Kay's friends told her she was nuts. "After deciding to drive I went to tell my family, expecting them to tell me I was nuts, too, but they all encouraged me."

Agatha Margaret Mickey Barlau Baden was born on May 17, 1938. Her parents were Reverend Werner Carl Barlau (1906-1974) and Margaret Selma Jeske (1906-1990.) Mickey married Donald Duane Baden, and they lived on 8th Avenue in Shakopee, between Main and Spencer Street.

In 1973, Mickey Barlau Baden had the most runs with eight. She started driving with the parochial bus to Chaska, and joined Shakopee three years ago. Mickey said she would recommend the job to others, but added that you had to be mentally and physically strong.

"It's a good job if you want to be home when the kids are," said Shirley Marek. Shirley was encouraged to try bus driving by her husband, who had driven bus before coming to Shakopee.

All of the women agreed that they were as capable as driving as the men. "If a man can turn a bus around, a woman can do the same thing," said Grace Schmitt, wife of owner Norb Schmitt.

It was quite new to have women bus drivers, even though a good drivers, and have a lot of experience with children. It was clear that the five women did well, as over time, more and more women became bus drivers.

