

Policeman Tickets Himself

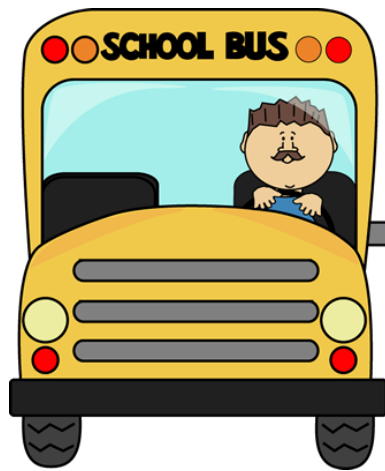
The story made national news – because of its rarity.

Police Chief Richard Knoebel of Kewaskum, Wisconsin, accidentally drove past a stopped school bus with its emergency lights flashing.

So Knoebel wrote himself a \$235 ticket, docked himself four points on his driving record, and paid the fine the next day.

The incident and the officer's actions happened in September 2006, and most people wouldn't have known about the officer's deed. But months after the ticket, a newspaper reporter discovered the record of Knoebel's ticket and fine.

While on patrol, Knoebel said he had become distracted by a stopped dump truck. Worried that a car quickly approaching the truck might collide with it, he moved to the next lane to pass the truck and give the oncoming car more room to stop.



That's when he realized he was passing a stopped school bus in the far lane. That didn't excuse breaking the law, however. The honest officer held himself accountable, even when most people weren't looking.

Knoebel said he didn't mind getting the attention if it served to raise awareness. "If it brings notice to people that they should be stopping for school buses, I don't mind the notoriety," he said.

Why was Knoebel's actions newsworthy, even on a national scale? One answer is that people seem to be eager to blame someone else, or something, for their mistakes or shortcomings rather than take responsibility.

And Knoebel's story also raises the question: How am I – or you – behaving when no one else is looking?

Accountability, honesty, character – all these virtues – help determine the integrity of a person. Integrity, in fact, is defined as "a personal choice, an uncompromising and predictably consistent commitment to honor moral, ethical, spiritual and artistic values and principles" – derived from *Integrity: Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reason*, published by McGill-Queen's University Press.

Integrity? We know it when we see it. And we admire it.

He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known (Proverbs 10:9 NKJV).