

Chalkboard

By

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Was I the only one who sensed a bit of irony last Thursday? I speak of having a *Chalkboard* publish the day before with the heading of “School Buses: Safety First”. Thursday morning I received that early morning call that one of our buses had been involved in a crash.

Thursday night, I sat out on the team bench at Pioneer Stadium watching our fans walk out in disbelief that we had ended the season with the undefeated Jr. Pioneers forfeiting the game because the officials had not shown.

The last thing I said to my wife, Regenia, before going to bed Thursday night was simple. It was, “Baby, you know, I think I’ll still put a **W** in the record book tonight. We had another day of school and nobody lost their life or limb.”

The bus accident was not our fault. Had either the driver of the SUV that hit us, the driver of bus, or one of the student passengers been killed or seriously injured, it would not have mattered much to me that morning who would have been deemed at fault. Had that unimaginable happened, I would have been unable then, as I am now to find words to express how I would have felt. I think it would have been a heartache that would be carried from that point on. I said a “Thank You” that morning to Jesus for sparing our district and some loved ones of those in those vehicles the burden of carrying that pain. I also gave sincere thanks to the “first responders” and officials who worked that scene. I give them now three words to describe their actions- professional, organized, and compassionate.

Metal can usually be straightened at some cost. Sometimes broken bodies cannot be repaired. I do not seek to be morbid. I merely say, “Please be extra careful when you share the road with a school bus; a lot is at stake.”

Why no officials at the game? Was that our fault? Maybe. Maybe not. As I was not seeking to be morbid earlier, I am not seeking to be coy here. I believe I could make an argument that we could have taken some different procedural steps that would have made the odds in our favor that it would not have happened. I think I could make an equally strong argument that someone else not at Gentry fumbled that ball. I’ll not make either argument, as it is a moot point to me. Nevertheless, we will make some changes in our procedures that should prevent such from happening again.

This second story has a happy ending also. I must be a fanatic because I said “Thank You” to Jesus about that also. I also said a similar “thank you”, to Dr. Jim Lewis, the superintendent of schools at Lincoln, and the head football coach, Mike Guthrie. After the dust settled over Thursday night, these men decided that fairness to the young men of both teams was a lot more important than an empty win. Friday, Dr. Lewis called me and the game was rescheduled for Monday night, November 1st. For me, it was one of the best examples of sportsmanship that I have seen during my tenure as an educator.

At the time I write this, the make-up game is one day in the future. I hope we win the game but, surprising or not, that is really a moot point to me also. Both teams are undefeated, both want to play, let the best team win.