

Love of the outdoors encourages winter postal carrier

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carrier. As the morning wears on with out any warming encouragement from the thermometer, Maben insists he enjoys the walking routes because he likes to be outside.

"I used to be a paper cutter and I didn't get out much. I'd be inside all day and I wouldn't see anybody all day. I wouldn't even see the sun," he said.

A few years ago, a friend suggested he take the civil service examination which is a prerequisite for hiring at the post office. He did, but two years passed before he was hired.

By that time, Maben had moved and neglected to notify the post office of his change of address.

WHEN HIS FRIEND was notified of a job, he suggested that Maben call and ask about his chances for a job. Maben did and he's been delivering mail ever since.

As he trudges through the freshly

fallen snow on Farmington Road, Maben explains why he isn't anxious to get a mobile route.

"When you're in the truck, it's not insulated and the wind hits it. And you have to keep your side of the window down, anyway. I figure you're just sitting there. At least this way (on foot) I'm moving around."

Once he starts moving, he can breeze through a condominium complex in less than a half-hour. After two years on the job, Maben has learned all the tricks of the trade.

New carriers must learn to realize they don't stop at every house. Like Maben did, they must learn to look at the address on the envelope and on the house while delivering mail.

This involves another little trick. Most persons hold the mail rigidly in their hand and look at the address from the top of the envelope toward the bottom.

"The address is usually low on the envelope," Maben explains, shuffling the mail with the expertise and dexterity of an old card shark handling a fresh deck.

"You have to look at the address from the bottom of the envelope," he continues, slanting the letters toward himself.

ANOTHER DEVICE carriers use to deliver the mail is to check the addresses while walking from one house to another. It's a skill that comes with practice, according to Maben, who remembers trainees stopping in front of each house to check the address against the next batch of letters.

Even after learning about the little devices that make the morning go smoother, a mail carrier must learn to deal with dogs.

Man's best friend sometimes makes an exception for the mail carrier.

"I have a bottle of Mace that I carry when I go through a residential area that has dogs," said Maben. The small spray bottle is given to all carriers for protection against dogs.

"But I don't use it. I'm afraid if it doesn't work, the dog won't be blinded and he'll keep coming after me."

Maben already has had one skirmish with a dog when he worked for a short time in Walled Lake. The dog waited for him every day and followed him down the block.

One time the animal knocked Maben against a tree and was coming at him with teeth bared when the carrier managed to put his mail bag between himself and the dog. Luckily the owner came out in time and called off the dog.

HE REMEMBERS being extremely upset about the incident.

But on this particular snowy day in Farmington, it's icy sidewalks not dogs that pose the problem.

Maben's supervisor, Caroline Houden, estimates that dogs and icy sidewalks pose the two greatest threats to a carrier's well-being.

Maben seems to have solved that problem by being attired in unfashion-

able but watertight black galoshes. He takes shortcuts across lawns to make time in delivering the mail, noting that there are a few lawns which he doesn't cross because the owners have complained to his supervisor.

The post office instructs carriers to take every means they can to cut their delivery time, including walking across lawns. But a customer complaint to a supervisor can exempt that lawn from the mail carrier's step.

Check out region before making move

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ed to be interviewed out-of-state and don't quit your present job until you've lined up another.

"People are still flocking to Dallas and Houston and Fort Worth very heavily," Brooks said. "The problem comes in because they don't need people there with the skills people in auto-related industries here have. And, unfortunately, many people pack up the car and family and head south or southwest with little chance of finding a job there."

IF THE AREA appeals to you, send a letter to a Houston-based companies telling them that you'll be in Houston

at such-and-such time and go yourself. If you land the job you can always send for your family."

Dahlin thinks the stormiest period of unemployment in the Detroit area has been weathered. If you've already survived the recession, Dahlin said, you might want to hang in there hoping the auto industry will "snap back," although nobody expects it to bounce back to the boom years of the early '60s.

Some of the hardest persons with white-collar job experience to place, Brooks said, are former auto-plant managers and supervisors as well as engineers who've spent years designing automotive equipment.

"They might have been working as engineers making sunvisors and armrests for Dodge Polaris," Brooks said. "The poor guys become what we like to call a 'left-handed widget specialist' who is of no value anywhere else in the country."

ONE TRICK in job seeking, Brooks said, is to disguise your actual job experience by couching it in very general terms.

"Give the job a functional term," Brooks said. "A windshield wiper engineer can tell people he has experience with electro-mechanical mechanisms." Such experience, Brooks said, might

be applicable in the growing industry of robots that weld metal or do other assembly work.

While he doesn't recommend lying on resumes, Brooks tells job seekers to think of the sheet as a sales brochure.

"All new cars look good in a brochure, all life-insurance plans look good in a brochure," he said.

Realizing most persons are uncomfortable about selling themselves, Brooks asks applicants what they want more, a reputation for modesty or a job. Be positive but avoid "the Muhammad Ali approach of 'I am the greatest,'" advises the personnel consultant.

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