

# These Gals Aren't Fazed By The Elements

Snow, sleet, ice or fog don't hold down these Farmington gals.

The gals in question aren't some of the distaff members of the postal force in town, but 34 of the 42 bus drivers employed by the Farmington School system.

Even a relative newcomer--Cathie Greenough, who has four months of service in--says that bad weather no longer frightens her.

(According to a popular theory, the ladies are supposed to be "afraid" of driving during the winter months. This falls to pieces when talking to the

bus drivers.)

The ladies like driving the bus as they find that the schedules fit into their own easily. They have enough time for the household chores, yet the break in routine keeps them free from "cabin fever" to which the more confined housewife is prone.

MRS. VIRGINIA BELCHER, a mother of three who became a driver three years ago, reported that her family doctor said it was the best move she ever made. He recommends some activity outside the home for every mother of a young

family.

According to Mrs. Belcher, her job has helped her toward a better understanding of her own brood. "They turned out not to be monsters after all," she confided. "Seeing the other kids in action made me realize that mine are just normally high spirited."

"I really love this job," Mrs. Belcher continued. "I used to be a rather strict disciplinarian, but now I'm more understanding. I got a great kick out of one little boy who was proud of our newly cleaned bus that he polished it up with the sleeve of his brand new

swater."

Mrs. Belcher admitted that the roads can get pretty rugged at times during the year. She recalled one trip when a particularly bad bump made her fly right out of her seat. Her passengers thought this was hilarious.

"BUSY" is what the children call Mrs. Louise Maslanko a veteran of 12 years' driving. She, too, has a contagious enthusiasm for her job. "There's something new going on every day," she says with a grin. "The kids are unpredictable and each run is a scenic tour."

According to "Bussy", getting out into the fresh air daily is one of the job's best features. Other dividends are (and her appearance bears this out) that it keeps one young and makes one appreciate much more the hours spent at home.

Mrs. Maslanko pointed out the benefits of a yearly refresher course which runs for four weekly meetings each winter. "It keeps us on our toes," she said, "and gives us the latest safety hints and good driving instructions."

LIKE MANY other drivers, Cathie Greenough was recruited by neighbors already employed by the schools. The mother of three children under the age of three, she says that her own kids are quite restless after a busload of 60 live wires each day.

"I can't even bear them," she grins, "it's like there's nobody there."

During the early fall Mrs. Greenough used to worry about how she would feel as a driver when the roads of her Wood Creek route became covered with snow and ice. Now that they are, she just takes it very easy and the sheer weight of her vehicle gives her confidence.

She has to remember, however, when she climbs into the Volkswagen that she's no longer behind the wheel of her big yellow monster. If she doesn't the results are apt to be drastic.

RECRUITED in the same way was Mrs. Maudie Rodgers who has now been on the job for 10 years. For no reason that she can fathom, the children call

her "Rosie", but she doesn't mind.

A grandmother, "Rosie" is fond of all her young charges. She got a warm feeling and a chuckle last year when one of the kindergartners singled her out as "the bestest driver we ever had."

Mrs. Margie Kowalski claims that during her four years of driving she has received a liberal education through the many field trips she has driven. On the course of these trips she has visited museums and other educational institutions.

At first she worried about snow and fog, but discovered that they weren't unmanageable. "The best trick," she confided, "is to carry a little shovel. You can usually get yourself out of a snowdrift with its help." Otherwise a call to the maintenance people is in order.

JOHN GRESEHOVER is the supervisor who sees to it that 7,800 children are transported a daily total of 2,600 miles in 42 large buses and five smaller vans.

He's been on the job for 14

years and is justifiably proud of his department's superior safety record. Any junior or senior high student who lives more than a mile and a half from his school is entitled to transportation.

By state law, elementary pupils who live more than a mile away are taken to school by bus unless the school is located in their own section.

In that case the students may walk up to a mile and a half. Certain exceptions are allowed if safety is involved. The foregoing is representative about how a group of Farmington gals feel about their job. There are still a few openings in the department and if you are interested in giving it a whirl contact Gresehover's office.



THE MOST SENIORITY -- Mrs. Arvilla Schwerin is the Farmington School bus driver with the most seniority, 15 years. She currently drives a van for the special education department and is shown helping two of her passengers alight at the Eagle School.



A NEWCOMER -- Mrs. Cathie Greenough, a bus driver of four months, is not daunted by her experience with winter driving. A mother of three youngsters, she maintains that driving a busload of 60 every day makes her much more tolerant of the shenanigans of her own small fry.

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