

Brothers offer a way to Lighten your Load at the Mailbox

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By John Kelly

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Last month, I wrote about the [excessive junk mail](#) that Fairfax's Jack French estimated he receives every year: close to 3,800 pieces from charities asking him to help fund this or that cause, or end this or that disease.

And that doesn't even count the catalogues that pile up. Why, just the other day I received a catalogue devoted to prom dresses -- and I'm not even going to the prom! (Oh wait, it's for my daughter.)

My former colleague Tracy Thompson suggested that Jack check out the Web site called [41pounds.org](#). It's named for the amount of junk mail the average U.S. adult receives each year, said Sander DeVries, co-founder of the site. Sander and his two brothers run a network support business in Ferndale, Mich., north of Detroit. In 2006, tired of all the direct-mail solicitations they were receiving, they researched how to get their names off the various lists.

"There wasn't a way just to do it in one fell swoop," said Sander, 26.

They had to visit various Web sites, fill in forms, and send e-mails. Some retailers required a signed postcard. But they persevered. When they were done, they weren't receiving junk mail. They sent a cheat sheet on how others could do as they did to about 100 friends and family members.

Said Sander: "We got all these responses back: 'This is great!' "

No one ended up doing it. It was too much work. That's why Sander and his brothers will do it for you. Their service costs \$41 and covers one address for five years, with as many names as there are at that address. So far more than 20,000 people have signed up.

"We guarantee that 85 to 90 percent of your junk mail will stop," Sander said.

Fifteen dollars of the fee is given to one of the charities you choose from a list of nonprofit groups that 41pounds.org works with, including Habitat for Humanity, Trees for the Future and the Carbon Fund.

Sander said it's an odd experience getting practically nothing in the mailbox and admits that 41pounds.org isn't for everyone.

"My grandma actually said, 'Honestly, I would sign up, but that's the only mail I get.' "

Here are some other services: Visit <http://www.optoutprescreen.com> to stop getting those preapproved credit card offers. Visit <http://www.catalogchoice.org> to reduce the number of catalogues. The Direct Marketing Association's <http://www.dmchoice.org> can help you control what sort of solicitations you receive.