

A lesson from the coupon queen: The savings is worth the time



Senior Beat
Carol Higgins Taylor

My mother has a great smile that she flashes frequently. You'd be fairly hard-pressed, however, to find something that can make her giddier than saving money at the grocery store.

Coupons. The word alone is enough to make her face light up and send her scurrying for scissors. You may be thinking, "How cute. Margie is watching her pennies by clipping coupons."

Don't be fooled. My mother is the master. She has clearly turned her hobby into an exact science. Her shelves are always well stocked and she manages to give away food to friends or organizations. This belies her fixed income.

So, just how does Margie do this?

"I take the Shaw's flyer from The Weekly on Thursdays and check their sales against my coupons," she said. "Then on Saturday, I look at the Hannaford flyer in the BDN. Then I make my list and shop both stores." This is easy, she added, because in Bangor the stores are about a mile apart.

"And sometimes you see 10 items for \$10 in the Shaw's flyer, which makes each item a dollar. And you can mix and match the 10 for 10 items," she said. "This is great because if I have a coupon, it brings the cost per unit down even more."

And her numbers are impressive. I've seen her take as much as 50 percent off her bill.

"You have to watch the sales and the unadvertised specials when you get to the store," she said. "Take all your coupons with you because you will need them if something is on special. And look ahead. While you might not need an item right now, it's good to stock up on staples. For instance, I bought a jar of spaghetti sauce that was usually \$1.99

but was on sale for \$1 and I had a coupon for 50 cents, which Shaw's doubled, so I actually got the sauce for free. And then there are the baked beans. They were two for \$1 and I had a coupon for \$1 off of four cans. I bought four, used my coupon, which made them 25 cents each. And they will keep. That's important during the winter and iffy weather."

She is particularly proud of her toothpaste savings.

"The original price was \$3.69, but it was on sale for half off, and I had a coupon, which came in the box of my previous tube — you can find coupons in many places — for 55 cents, which was doubled," she said. "The end price was 75 cents."

It is not just the using of the coupons that she has down to an art form, but the organization of them, as well.

"Being organized is key," Margie said, displaying her tightly stuffed envelopes. "I like using these. My daughter and even a friend of hers bought me coupon holders but I really prefer the envelopes. I label them such as 'current' for those that expire in the present month, then each envelope is labeled by food category. At the end of every month, I go through all of them, putting the ones for the next month, in the order of expiration date, into the 'current' envelope. Wouldn't want to lose one."

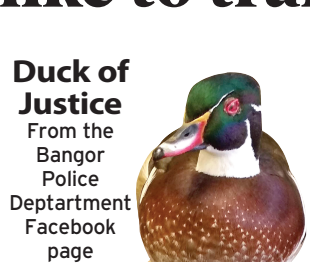
I admit, it seemed like a lot of work. And who has the time, really? But like most things with my mother, the message seeped in slowly, relentlessly, until I found myself, scissors in hand, scanning the coupon flyers in the weekend BDN.

I am a convert. So what if I have four jars of mayonnaise ahead? I saved \$1 on each one. Her system works and is worthy of admiration, like most everything else she does.

"It's a numbers game. You merge what is on sale against the amount of the coupon," she said. "You will be amazed at the bargains if you do."

Carol Higgins Taylor is an advocate for seniors and owns Bryant Street Public Relations in Bangor. Email her at seniorbeat@gmail.com.

New Bangor Police officer reveals what it's like to transition from Scotland to Bangor



Duck of Justice
From the Bangor Police Department Facebook page

Duncan Bowie (and his interpreter) stopped by for his "Meet the New Guys" exclusive interview with me.

Making the transition from the Edinburgh Scotland Police Department to Bangor PD has been interesting ... at least for us.

I remember when the chief of police told him that skirts, at least at work, were not part of the uniform. Bowie's eyes watered a little but he put on the pants. We appreciate it. We saw his field training officer getting some instruction in proper donning of the kilt and we looked away quickly.

I sat him down for our interview process. It is a little laid back, so bear with us.

TC: How do you spend your days off?

DB: Spending time with my wife and three children. Trying to keep up to date with the endless number of jobs that need to be done. Apparently this is part of being a responsible adult. I try to encourage the children not to grow up.

TC: Why did you become a police officer?

DB: A total cliché, I know, but I like to help people. My first real job was working for a large bank. From 1990 to 2004 I watched it change from being a business that was there to serve the needs of it's customers. Then it became a machine designed to squeeze as much profit out of the customers as possible. So I left. I became a police officer in Scotland. Am I bitter and cynical? Oh, yes.

TC: If you were on a deserted island, what are the three things that you would want, not including food and water?

DB: My family. I dragged them 3,000 miles from Scotland to Maine, via Indiana, so they are getting used to it

now. I would also like my PC with Internet access. I am 44 years old and I play computer games. It is my guilty secret.

TC: You mean, it was your guilty secret.

DB: Good point.

TC: What else?

DB: I might take a couple of political candidates with me.

TC: Makes sense.

TC: How did you end up on the island?

DB: By trying to navigate my way from Main Street to somewhere on D-beat. I need to work on my navigational skills a lot. My training officer sighs quite a bit when I am driving. I also find him a little bit mean, at times.

TC: Understood.

TC: What is the best advice you could give your grandchildren?

DB: Learn to read a map. Or, maybe enjoy being a child while you can and have fun with your life.

TC: If I gave you \$100, what would you do with it?

DB: At this time, I would send it to one of the charities for the fallen officers in Dallas. Maybe take my wife out for a nice meal. It is hard work being married to me and I do not show my appreciation enough.

TC: Do you ever get your skirts mixed up? I am curious by nature.

DB: Now and again. It happens.

TC: Me, too.

DB: Do you have a kilt?

TC: No.

DB: How would you get mixed up?

TC: This is my interview.

TC: Tell me more about yourself.

DB: I was born in the town of Dalgety Bay in the Kingdom of Fife, Scotland. I grew up in the fishing village of Eyemouth in the Scottish Borders and I eventually settled in Musselburgh, just south of Edinburgh. I went to Eyemouth High School.

TC: Favorite food.

DB: I like meat pies and stews. And yes, I like haggis, neeps and tatties.

TC: I thought everyone liked tatties.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BANGOR POLICE DEPARTMENT

Newly-hired Bangor Police Officer Duncan Bowie comes to the city from the Edinburgh Scotland Police Department.

DB: Do you mean mashed turnip and mashed potato?

TC: I like those.

DB: Locally, W.A. Bean has haggis for sale, but it is missing one vital ingredient — sheep's lungs. Some nonsense about "not fit for human consumption."

TC: I will stick with the neeps and tatties.

TC: Three favorite bands?

DB: Iron Maiden, Magnum (British band, not the American band of the same name), Sabaton, a Swedish band that have some catchy tunes.

TC: Favorite movie?

DB: "Conan the Barbarian." The original with Arnold.

"Shrek" was pretty good, as well.

TC: How long will you last here at the Bangor Police Department?

DB: Until I cause some sort of a scandal due to people not understanding my accent or the words that I use.

TC: What?

DB: Until I cause som ... funny.

TC: Say some Scottish

stuff.

DB: British English turns out to be different from American English. I say, car park. You say, parking lot. I say, carriage-way. You say, lane. I say, verge. you say, field. I often have to choose my words carefully when speaking to people, to make sure they understand me.

TC: What was the best part of the police academy for you?

DB: Being told by the training cadre that, "I am going to need an interpreter for this one!" This happened as he walked away from speaking with me.

I also loved graduation. I did not like being apart from my wife and children from Monday through Friday for 18 weeks.

TC: Do you like, Donkee?

DB: We should have waffles.

TC: I am in. Welcome aboard.

We will be here. Say "hi" to Duncan when you meet him. He is fun to listen to. He fits in well.

TC out.

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Bangor Dental Associates is excited to announce that Dr. Susan Dellaripa, DMD will be joining our practice this summer on August 1, 2016! Dr. Dellaripa practiced as a General Dentist with the United States Air Force for four years. She recently completed a year-long General Practice Residency in Lewiston. Dr. Dellaripa is looking forward to relocating to Bangor and working alongside Dr. Spekhardt and the rest of our team to provide dental care for you and your family.

Bangor Dental Associates would like to extend a special thank you to Dr. Rachel Lukas, DMD who will be leaving the practice to return home to Massachusetts at the end of July. Joining our practice in 2014, Dr. Lukas played an integral part in growing Bangor Dental Associates and caring for our patients at it's new location at 62 Corporate Drive. We thank Dr. Lukas and wish her the very best in her future endeavors.

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