

Woman saves \$227 using 499 coupons

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Estrella Dietz has turned grocery shopping into a marathon event.

Although aisles stacked with loaves of bread and bottles of ketchup seem an unlikely setting for an endurance contest, Dietz has set records. The super shopper used seven grocery carts and 499 coupons in her latest shopping event. Her careful planning saved more than \$200 at the finish line, a new record for the marathon shopper.

A secretary at St. Mary's University, for the past three years she has gone to the grocery store only twice a year. The task is monumental, a feat of stamina and strategy. After months of preparation, clad in Reeboks and armed with hundreds of coupons, she began her most recent 7.5-hour odyssey at the Lackland Air Force Base commissary.

Her husband, Richard, a retired master sergeant, accompanied her. "I get the fruits and vegetables and I push the baskets," he said.

But she took charge of the operation. "I hate crowds and I hate shopping," she said. "I would rather just go once or twice a year and get it over with."

Her first 1988 trip was early this summer. This time she came without a list. "I didn't prepare a list this time because I wanted to check out the

10 a.m. she was on aisle 3. "Get me another basket, honey," Dietz asked her husband.

She loaded the cart with packages of tea. "Right here I can save \$20, since I have \$1 off coupons for each box." There were 2,000 tea bags in the cart.

Dietz combed through the damaged goods section for bargains.

"You can find things that are perfectly good here and use coupons with them and really save. You can get some great bargains." She got a dented box of pancake mix for just 19 cents that way.

Midway through her trip, disaster happened. Dietz dropped her coupons. Luckily, only a few dozen spilled to the floor and she quickly retrieved them. Barely 5 feet tall, she gets quite a workout on her grocery store rounds. She must clamber onto the lowest shelves to reach goods stacked on top shelves.

One cart overflowed with cat food — 13 bags of dry plus assorted cans of feline chow. A new cat collar also went into the cart.

Aisle by aisle the load increased. Sixteen rolls of paper towels. Fabric softener sheets for only 7 cents. Dishwashing liquid.

Dietz took the day off from work to do her shopping. "Last time, seven months ago, I went on a Saturday. It was too busy."

Checking her coupons she explained that she gets free milk, free orange juice, free bread, free fruit, and free soup with various cereal purchases.

After nearly six hours, she was giddy with success.

During her hours at the commissary, she took filled carts to a special waiting area at the front of the store, marking each cart with a sign, "Patron still in store," so the groceries would not inadvertently be restocked.

Upon reaching aisle 14, Dietz smiled broadly and heaved a sigh of relief. "I'm almost through!"

At the checkout counter, Michelle Scallion, a checker with four years' experience looked wide-eyed at the carts of groceries. "I heard there was a lady in here with seven carts," she said. "I thought it was a joke!"

Dietz put her first can on the conveyor belt at 3:40 p.m. She got her receipt at 4:17 p.m. One store employee helped her unload her baskets, two checked the coupons and Scallion rang the items on the cash

register. Two baggers worked rapidly to fill the 76 bags. As she talked coupons, Teresa Garza joked, "The cashier next to me went home. He was afraid she would come to him!"

The total, before subtracting the 499 coupons, was \$860.46. Dietz saved \$227.52 by using coupons. The total after coupons was \$632.94, which includes a 5 percent surcharge (\$40.97 here) normally applied at the commissary. Dietz was thrilled with her coupon savings. "And none of them were double coupons," she declared.

Cashiers broke into applause as Scallion read out the total from the 10-foot-long receipt. "673.91 and my arm is still there!"

The baggers stuffed the 76 bags, 20-pound sack of potatoes and giant boxes of laundry detergent into the couple's Mazda truck. By 4:40 p.m. the Dietzes were on their way home.

Once there, it took Dietz more than an hour just to unload the bags from the car. It took four hours to unpack the bags, she said.

Now she'll begin preparing for her next trip, probably in May or June. "I would recommend that everyone save coupons. I tear them out of newspapers or magazines each day and spend about an hour each weekend organizing them."

As for her marathon shopping expedition, she's glad it's done for half a year. "It's tedious but it's worth it."

Atom smasher poses big change of pace in small Texas town

MAYPEARL (AP) — On this particular fine morning, the talk around the tables at the Busy Bee Cafe is about things you can't eat with false teeth, squirrel hunting, hauling firewood and a cow named Dorene.

It isn't much different from conversations most mornings at the Busy Bee, where the men of Maypearl gather to drink coffee, gossip, kid each other and express opinions about what's going on in the big world outside — a world that until recently had thoroughly ignored Maypearl.

But last month the Department of Energy announced its intention to build the \$5.4 billion super collider — the world's largest atom smasher — in a 53-mile, doughnut-shaped tunnel under the fields and pastures of Ellis County. Maypearl is about to become part of the big world, and life here is speeding up.

"Reporters came from everywhere," Ann Heath, the Busy Bee's owner and chief cook, says. "A TV crew from Houston spent a whole day in here. They even came in the kitchen and took pictures of us cooking. When they showed it on the news, we had people driving all the way from Houston just to see May-

pearl and eat at the Busy Bee."

If the super collider actually is built, everyone agrees, life in Ellis County will be transformed. And Maypearl will undergo the most radical transformation of all the towns. Just outside Maypearl a campus resembling a small university will be built for the offices of the project's researchers and administrators and the laboratories where the giant instrument's brain work will be done.

Thousands of people will move in, particularly construction workers, during the years it will take to bore the tunnel and build the related facilities. Maypearl, a quiet farming community of 400-some odd souls, about a dozen businesses and one policeman, will be one of the major science centers of the world.

Though the government says it wants the super collider in Ellis County, the fight in Congress to pay for its construction has only begun.

If the money is approved, though, the super collider would be the biggest thing that has happened to Maypearl since April 29, 1903, when Irene Bowers hammered in the golden spike that signified the completion of the International & Great Northern railroad line.

What's Up

Thursday

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY/JUNGIAN SOCIETY OF BRAZOS VALLEY: Dr. David Rosen will speak about the "Death of the Inner Witch and Birth of the Creative Self" at 7:30 p.m. in 301 Rudder.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at 845-0280 for details on today's meeting.
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS: call the C.P.D.E. at 845-0280 for details on today's meeting.
SWAP: will answer questions from "The Book of Questions" at 7 p.m. in 402 Rudder.
TAMU INTERNATIONAL FOLK DANCERS: will teach and demonstrate folk dancing from 8-10 p.m. in 231 MSC.
TAMU MACINTOSH USERS GROUP: will meet at 7 p.m. in 206 MSC.
FELLOWSHIP OF CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: will have a Bible study at 7 p.m. in 407 Rudder.

Friday

AGGIE PARTNERS FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS: will have a Christmas dance at 7 p.m. in 212 MSC.
INTERNATIONAL CELEBRANT SINGERS: will give a free concert at 7 p.m. at Aldersgate United Methodist Church.
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS: call the Center for Drug Prevention and Education at 845-0280 for details on today's meeting.
FISH CAMP '89: counselor applications will be available Jan. 16 in 213 Pavilion.

Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no later than three business days before the desired run date. We only publish the name and phone number of the contact if you ask us to do so. What's Up is a Battalion service that lists non-profit events and activities. Submissions are run on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no guarantee an entry will run. If you have questions, call the newsroom at 845-3315.

Clements promises to veto any bill that increases taxes

AUSTIN (AP) — Gov. Bill Clements said Wednesday he sees no need for a tax increase when the Legislature convenes in January.

"I have said that I will veto any new taxes," he told reporters during an impromptu news conference. "I don't want any misunderstanding about this. I am set in concrete."

Clements made the comments to reporters after a ceremony where he received a small bronze bust of himself and one of President Reagan from sculptor Jonas Perkins of Fredericksburg.

Comptroller Bob Bullock last week issued his forecast of state revenue, estimating that lawmakers would have about \$1.6 billion more to spend in the 1990-91 budget years than was spent in the current budget period.

Bullock said another \$1.5 billion

needs to be set aside to cover possible losses from various court challenges to the corporate franchise tax and other legal actions.

The Legislative Budget Board estimated on Monday that lawmakers will face at least a \$1 billion shortfall, possibly more, to continue the current level of state services.

One of the major factors that could raise the need for more money is a state district judge's ruling that the current method of funding public education is unconstitutional. An appeal of that decision is pending in the 3rd Court of Appeals at Austin.

"We've taken the first step in a 1,000-mile journey," the governor said of the coming budget-writing Legislature.

The Legislature in 1987 raised taxes a record \$5.7 billion to cover a 1988-89 deficit.

"I heard there was a lady in here with seven carts. I thought it was a joke!"
—Michelle Scallion, commissary checker

many new items in the store. Also, I wanted to take advantage of the specials. I don't need a list. I can remember what I need."

She began her shopping at 9 a.m. With her tray of coupons arranged alphabetically and propped in the seat of the cart, Dietz began selecting items: four jars of super chunky peanut butter, 30 cans of tomato sauce, eight cake mixes in assorted flavors from German chocolate to lemon.

Most of her purchases were basics and staples. She is allergic to milk and both she and her husband are diabetic and have to watch what they eat.

At the beginning of aisle 2 she got serious and removed her jacket. By

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