

family



JERRY CAMMARATA
FATHERS DIARY

Getting something for nothing

When a supermarket makes the front page of the local newspaper you would expect it was either robbed or cans of food were found to be contaminated. Recently on Staten Island, a supermarket did make the headlines, however, for giving food away through the coupon system. To induce consumers to buy, the supermarket offered a triple coupon sale and just about every penny pinching household was there.

One of the joys of shopping in a supermarket is to put your youngest child in the cart and walk through the aisles talking about what you need for the house and where the items may be. The child is being visually stimulated by all the colorful labels and the speech mom and dad are using is driving the messages home. If you decided to attend the supermarket's coupon sale, bringing your child would have been a disaster. You couldn't move let alone see the items on the shelves through a three deep wall of other shoppers. It was a price to pay, however, to keep the food bill down as much as possible.

Just as parents have to work hard at keeping the household bills down in order to keep up with inflation, our kids need to be conservative and conscientious about the way they spend their dimes, quarters and dollars. It is up to us as parents to start our kids on the road of buying wisely and looking for the least expensive way of gaining access to goods and services without compromising quality (of course, how many children do you know really ever consider quality?).

The Meadowbrook Press has been an extremely important publication source at my house this past year in coping with the strain of inflation. My two girls are always looking to get their hands on information for a school project or pictures for their bedroom walls. Sometimes their requests are reasonable but cannot be fulfilled by a visit to the free public library. Rather, we have to go to a store and buy the item. We do that less frequently now. Now, the girls just go to the book shelf in the den and look through the Meadowbrook

Press' publication, "Free Stuff for Kids."

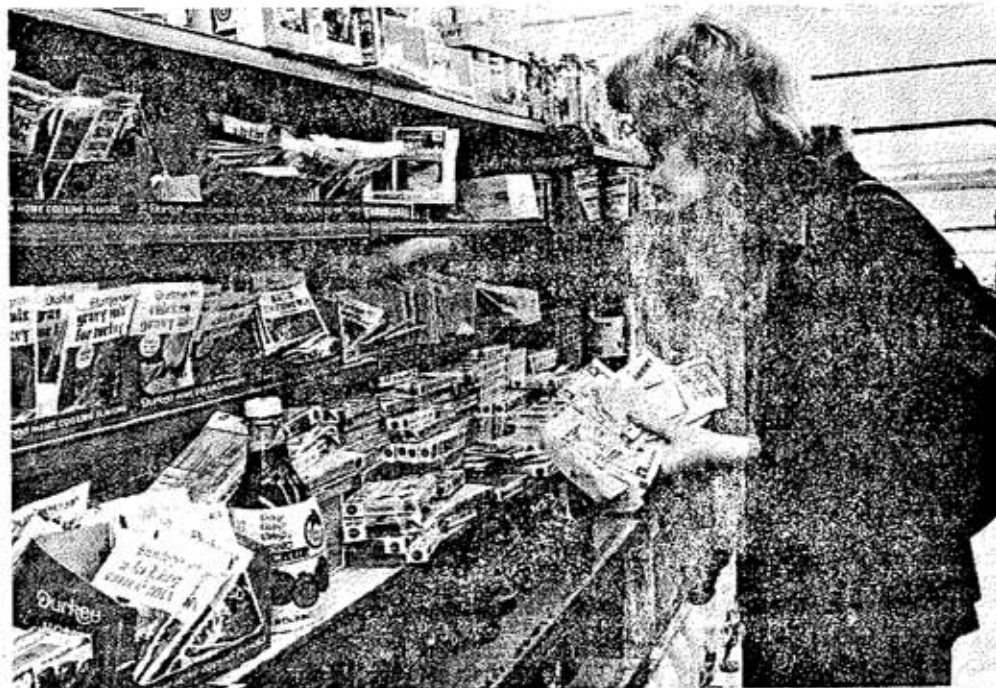
From free to a dollar, my kids are getting more school project ideas and material and generally learning more than I could ever afford to give them. What I found excellent about the book is its diversity. My girls choose to send for things they want, providing them with more enjoyment and creative play.

By the way, "Free Stuff for Kids" has also enabled them to develop their writing skills, use the postal system and establish contact and dialogue with people and companies around the country that they never would have exposure to. Also, a little geography lesson goes along with each new mailing of an order. The girls can go to a map and find out where the city is located as well as investigate the area's climate and sites of interest. After all, who knows, one day they may have to go to Sioux City, Iowa or Walnut Creek, California. They'll be prepared.

What stuff is free

Nutrition is the "in" topic today. If you profess to be a health food freak, you can win the respect of your friends. My daughter, Elizabeth, is a group in this regard and wants to know all about nutrition. She decided to write to the California Apricot Advisory Board and order a nutrition calculator—it was FREE.

Michelle, my youngest daughter,



The coupon war.

Doug Wetzstein—News World

has a wild passion for animals. We usually have a gold fish, hamster, a cat or two and even an ant farm at all times: for the exotic animals, we go to the several zoos in the New York metropolitan area. Michelle wanted to personalize her room last month with pictures of animals. Now she has more than 50 stuffed animals of all sizes. While flipping through "Free Stuff for Kids," she found just what she wanted—a 23" X 29"

animal coloring poster with over 140 animals in the picture. The poster was available from the American Education Society of Massachusetts and cost only one dollar. For only one dollar, Michelle had herself a fun project that took over two weeks to complete and involved the participation of the whole family. Now, what can you get these days for a buck that can give you lots of productive leisure fun for two weeks?

The things we've gotten go on and on. But, enough of what we got. I recommend you make an investment of \$2.95 and purchase, "Free Stuff for Kids," from Meadowbrook Press, Wayzata, Minnesota, 55391. When you get the book in the mail you then can, once again, count your loose change to buy fun for your kids and not have to pull bills out of your wallet.