

COLUMNIST FOR A DAY

Bemoaning lack of local discount days

By Andrea Jansen
for the Mail Tribune

As a bi-coastal citizen, I can't help but make comparisons between our local culture and my place of birth: New York City.

Funny how that puts an instant slant on local people's appraisal of me, but that's OK. It balances those Yankee perceptions that I'm panning for gold on weekends, when not cultivating my pot patch.

To make matters worse I worked for an ad agency in Manhattan, so the dynamics of that cutthroat industry is ingrained in me, too. Shopping in the supermarket reminds me of my former self, where Madison Avenue screams out at every turn. I congratulate myself whenever I make it through the candy-gauntlet to the cashier without snatching an impulse item, don't you?

LEND US YOUR VOICE

Do you have a point? Then maybe you can be a columnist for a day. Email a 500-word column to Mail Tribune features editor David Smigelski at dsmigelski@mailtribune.com, and include your city of residence. The rules are simple. Keep it short. Have a point. Don't cuss. And make us glad we asked.

This must be the root of my obsession with supermarket discount days, or the lack thereof. Surprising to me, discount days are more popular back East than they are here. Most supermarkets, and many stores, have at least one each month and allow for variables such as Social Security and SNAP recipients, whose benefits are staggered throughout the month. Those on fixed incomes rarely have much left toward the end of their allotment period and often cannot take full advantage of discount days scheduled for the early part of the month.

Example: SNAP benefits arrive each month on the day following the last digit of one's Social Security number, so for Senior Jane Doe that means the 5th. If Mega-Chain offers its Senior Day on the first Thursday of the month, then in 2015 Jane will miss a full grocery cart of discounts for 6 out of 12 months. The problem is worse for Social Security numbers ending in higher numbers.

Perhaps the propensity of Senior Days is directly related to proximity to the

SEE JANSEN, C2

JANSEN

From Page C1

Big Apple. I can just imagine the creative meetings in my head:

"Offer the 10 percent discount on a date AFTER the 10th, or 5 percent twice

a month, so customers can purchase more products. Think of all the new customers they'll attract; sales will far surpass the discounts."

"Why limit them to seniors? Why not everyone on SNAP? Especially because the government is bound to announce another round of

budget cuts. It's a perfect grassroots solution to help offset the problem."

"Let's not forget soldiers and veterans. People love philanthropy, especially in camouflage."

The art department mocks-up some splashy ads; smartly dressed salesmen

successfully make their pitch; and everyone is thrilled to continue their B'mer payments. Saving consumers some money may be a byproduct, but what's the harm in that?

—Andrea Jansen lives in Eagle Point.