

"Cutting Corners"

Appearing in the Sun-Sentinel's Lifestyle section every Sunday

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Cutting Corners columnist

Free gift certificates for The Home Depot, bookstores, restaurants, hotels, movie theaters or other places

They're among the choices Broward reader Adele Sines and other consumers get when redeeming old-fashioned S&H green stamps or the company's modern "green points." Sines says she has quite a few green stamps. She wonders: Whom should she contact to redeem them?

Answer: Let me back up a moment to explain green stamps and green points. Those of us of a certain age will remember green stamps as a perk of supermarket purchases. They were like airline frequent-flier points, but instead you'd redeem them for free house items like toasters.

At Greenpoints.com, you nowadays can earn 10 "green points" for every dollar spent at more than 100 merchants reached through its links, including OfficeDepot.com, OfficeMax.com, Cheaptickets.com and Netflix.com. Those points can be redeemed for goodies such as a free movie ticket or \$5 Burger King gift certificate (4,500 points apiece). Other examples include a \$25 Home Depot gift certificate (19,900 points) or a \$25 Giftcertificates.com "SuperCertificate" to use at restaurants, bookstores, hotels or hundreds of other places (22,000 points). Household goods still can be had. A pocket magnifier falls at the low end (1,200 points). Toward the high end, a jogging stroller requires 109,000 points.

Chances are you haven't seen a green stamp in years. But to answer Sines' question, here's how to redeem them: Call S&H at 1-800-435-5674 to request that a free Greenpoints.com account be set up for you or enroll yourself at Greenpoints.com. Either way, you'll be assigned a "member number."

Mail - via insured parcel post - your completely stamped S&H books to: S&H Greenpoints, Customer Care Center, P.O. Box 4000, Fenton, MO 63099. Include a note stating your name, address, phone number and S&H member number. State that you want to convert the green stamps to green points; you'll get a one-to-one exchange, meaning 1,200 points for every book of 1,200 stamps. Alternatively, request a check; you'd get \$1.20 for each completed book.

If you have a pile of stamps but no official S&H book to paste them into, paste them onto 8.5-by-11-inch sheets of paper. It takes 1,200 stamps to equal one book. Partially completed books are rejected. For information, call 1-800-435-5674.

COUPON QUEST: Before you order a pizza or other cheap eats, check online to see whether the eatery offers printable coupons on its Web site. Example: Nathan's Famous offers a buy-one-hot-dog, get-one-free coupon at NathansFamous.com. Locations

include Boca Village Square in Boca Raton (561-347-0774) and Sunrise's Sawgrass Mall (954-846-1394).

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Cutting Corners appears on Sundays. E-mail: Cutcorner@aol.com. Leave a recorded message at 954-356-4759.