

THE SWEEPSTAKES FRAUD

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THE SWEEPSTAKES FRAUD

You go to your mailbox today and find an official document from an Awards Committee claiming that you've JUST WON \$5,000! All you have to do is run in the house and call them to claim your prize! What joy! You can't believe it! You were wondering how you would pay the rent this month and now all your troubles are over. You call all your friends and relatives to tell them you've just won a sweepstakes. Everyone is happy for you and willing to help you spend your money correctly (to their benefit, of course.)

Now comes the rain on your parade. You call the 900-number to claim your prize. Who cares if the fine print says the call costs 98c per minute. You've just won \$5,000. What's 98c to you?

After being kept on hold for quite awhile you find out you've won \$5,000 worth of COUPONS! What? You thought it was money you won? Whoops - sorry, you just paid 98c per minute (or about \$9.80) for a bunch of worthless coupons you could have probably cut out of your Sunday paper. It's a rip-off pure and simple!

The TV show 60 Minutes had a special segment about these companies. The rip-off sweepstakes company gets MILLIONS of dollars per day with their 900 phone lines just from people like you. They put you on hold so they can make MORE money from you. It has been reported that some operators will sit by the phone, timing you on their watch to see how long you'll hang on. The longer you hold on and run up your phone bill - the more "stupid" they claim you are.

Yes folks! These types of companies are run by heartless, cruel and horrible individuals that sit back and laugh at the very people lining their pockets with money! The government cannot shut them down because they are giving you \$5,000. Its your problem that you thought it was "money" instead of "coupons." (This is an example of those "Legitimate Scams" I have been warning you about in other Victoria's Reports.) Always remember that if you REALLY win money in a sweepstakes it is unlawful to charge you even 1c to claim it! In addition, if you win any contest whatsoever, a real prize committee will visit you personally or call you themselves at their own expense.

Honest sweepstakes are set up to entice people to try the products the company is selling who is running the sweepstakes. Publishers Clearing House is probably one of the best well-known sweepstakes around. We all get them in our mailbox every January and February. They are popular because people order magazines just to enter the sweepstakes. The sweepstakes itself is very honest. However, a lady who used to work for them told me that if a sweepstakes form is returned WITHOUT an order, it is normally discarded. Only a small majority are entered into the sweepstakes - or just

enough to keep the federal agents off their back. Of course, if you order though - you have nothing to worry about. You have a whole one chance in 17 million to win a prize!

Personally, if you enjoy entering sweepstakes, I would suggest that you contact Nick Taylor, 4215 Winnetka N #219, Minneapolis MN 55428. Nick publishes a newsletter called "The Best Sweepstakes Newsletter". It is filled with complete instructions for entering sweepstakes which give you a greater chance of winning. The newsletter even holds it's own contests and drawings _ so you should be able to win something sooner or later! Subscriptions are \$17.50 per year, but Nick will send you a sample copy to whet your appetite for \$2.50. (Be sure to mention that you read about him in Victoria's Report No. 138.)

Remember folks, that nobody is going to give you something free when they call you on the phone or send you a letter telling you that you have won a prize. But there are people that fall for these scams over and over again without thinking. The problem lies in the fact that these companies fill people with a bunch of hype and play on them emotionally. Everybody wants to have enough money to pay their bills, take a fabulous vacation, relax in their yacht, pay the children's way through college, work the hours they want to work, tell the boss to "take that job and shove it" and buy a new car and home for their family. Can you think of anyone that would turn down a proposition like this?

Human beings love the idea of getting something for nothing. For some reason it makes them feel like they are special and respected for all the hard work they have done all their life. People who have continually strived for something in life, only to have the door shut in their face are potential customers for scams and rip-off artists. These cruel people are only after the money you have worked so hard to make - so protect yourself now!