

## Ontario woman makes contest-winning a career

After losing her internet marketing job in 2001, 39-year-old mother Carolyn Wilman decided to turn her part-time contest hobby into her full-time career.

CTV.ca News Staff

Updated: Wed. Mar. 22 2006 10:53 PM ET

Do you think winning contests has something to do with luck? Think again.

Oshawa, Ont. native Carolyn Wilman has made a career out of winning contests.

After losing her Internet marketing job in 2001, the 39-year-old mother of one decided to turn her part-time contest hobby into her full-time career.

"I think it's past \$80,000 in five years," Wilman said.

Wilman was inspired to make the shift by an article in *Reader's Digest* that profiled a woman who was a full-time tester.

Last year alone, Wilman won more than 150 contests, the *Toronto Star* reported.

The cash total of the prizes? About \$34,000 – which is \$10,000 more than the average urban income in Canada.

The prizes have range from free food to luxury vacations.

"We won a romantic weekend away to Quebec...a year's supply of gold fish snacks...a year's supply of pizza," Wilman told CTV News.

And it's not only Wilman who benefits from the contest goodies. In fact, she wins so much stuff that she gives it away to family and friends.

Wilman's husband, Craig, has definitely benefited from his wife's work.

"I think my favourite prize was I won a chance to go be a bikini contest judge down in Florida for the Hawaiian Tropics -- that was pretty tough," he said.

So if it's not luck that has got her all this great stuff, what is it? Persistence.

Wilman enters approximately 6,000 to 7,000 ballots for different contests each month.

"Now that sounds like a lot but its not a lot when you think of how many a day. I submit about 200 a day and that is not 200 contests - - that's 200 ballots," Wilman said.

Rather than filling out each card individually, she uses a special computer program that allows her to auto-fill online entry forms.

"It makes it really easy," Wilman said. Inspired yet?

All the information you could want on the science of entering contests is available on the Internet. Wilman also suggests joining a newsletter or a group. Or read her new self-published book, *You Can't Win If You Don't Enter*.

With a report from CTV's Scott Laurie