



Texas Lottery  
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# NEWS

*from the Texas Lottery Commission*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Thursday, July 9, 2009

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## **SAN ANTONIO WOMAN WINS \$1 MILLION BY PAYING ATTENTION TO A ‘SIGN’**

**(AUSTIN)** –Maybe it was a sign or maybe it was just some dropped money, but for Edwina “Sissie” West of San Antonio, the \$20-bill that fell out of her purse was a message that pointed the way to a \$1 million prize in *\$500,000,000 Blockbuster*.

“I was at the HEB on my lunch hour picking up a few things to take back to the office, and on my way out while I was fumbling for the keys in my purse, a \$20-bill fell out in front of the Lottery ticket machine, and right away, I wondered to myself why that happened,” West said. “I took it as a sign. If that bill had not fallen out, I would have kept right on going.”

She bought the ticket from the Instant Ticket Vending Machine (ITVM) and went back to her office at the Texas Cancer Clinic, where she has been an oncology nurse for 11 years.

West was chatting with a patient when she remembered the ticket in her purse. When the patient left, she was left alone in the office and scratched the ticket.

“I saw that million-dollar prize and I didn’t know if I should scream, holler or cry,” West said. “Then I had to change my glasses to get another look at that prize, just to make sure.”

When she went home that afternoon to her husband, Frankie, there would be another surprise waiting for her from her daughter.

**(more)**

**(Texas Lottery Commission news release, continued)**

“Last year, I was diagnosed with breast cancer and had surgery, but we found the cancer early, so I’m doing well now,” West said. “My daughter, at age 36, also was diagnosed with breast cancer, and she also is doing very well. She decided last year that on the one-year anniversary of my surgery, we would go celebrate in Las Vegas at the Golden Nugget, where I love staying. When I got home on Monday with my big news, the tickets to Vegas were waiting in the mail. After I told my husband about the ticket, I just had to sit there and let it all sink in. Both these things happening in one day remind me that things happen when they’re supposed to. The longer I live, the more I believe that.”

When West returns from Las Vegas, she’ll begin preparing for another major event in her life. She and her husband are building a retirement home in Devine, just south of San Antonio, to which they will soon move. Her belief that there is an unseen order to the universe and in earthly events also figures prominently in this big move.

“I thought I was going to be about \$20,000 short for a meditation area that I wanted to build for myself at our new home and I had given up the idea that it was going to happen,” she said. “Well, not anymore. I told my husband that I was going to get my meditation area after all, just down from the patio and his barbecue area. This prize has been a real blessing.”

“The experience of winning \$1 million can be so spectacular that it’s difficult to put it into words, but ‘blessing’ is certainly one word we often hear from our winners,” said Texas Lottery Commission Deputy Executive Director Gary Grief. “We’re also pleased that this prize will lay the foundation for a meditation center at her new home in Devine. This is the fifth million-dollar prize to be claimed in this game, which means there are still 35 that remain. The top prize is \$2.5 million.”

**(more)**

West said she's been looking forward to her trip to Las Vegas not just because of the anniversary of her successful surgery. There's some history with the Golden Nugget.

"In 1971, I was there playing a progressive slot machine and won \$23,000," she said. "I used it to buy a new Camry, and I still had money left over for other things. What I like about the Golden Nugget is the level of security they have. I feel very safe there and, on top of that, I have a great memory of it."

West has been at her current job for 11 years, and worked for another radiation oncology clinic for 22 years prior to that.

"The first doctor was from London, and when he retired, he moved back to England," she said. "The doctor I work for now hired me right after that and he has been great to me. He was there for me then, so I want to make sure that I'm there for him now and make my departure as smooth as possible."

West plans to keep playing the Lottery when she retires.

"I'm there every Wednesday and Saturday for *Lotto*, like I have been since the game started," she said. "Heck, why not, one of these days, it might be me. And it's like I tell Frankie, I don't care about the odds; I like having fun. That's what I was thinking when I won the \$23,000 all those years ago, and Frankie was telling me about the odds then, too."

Mr. and Mrs. West have been married 41 years. Her recipe for a successful marriage includes two things that have helped her all her life, she said, especially during the last 16 months through the battle she has waged.

"Have patience, don't just throw your arms up if you're frustrated," she said. "Have faith, above all, and don't ever give up."

(more)

West bought the ticket at the HEB Food Store #224, 7951 Guilbeau Road, in San Antonio. The store is eligible to receive a bonus of \$10,000 for selling this ticket.

Tomorrow's *Mega Millions*<sup>®</sup> jackpot is worth an estimated \$12 million. Saturday's *Lotto Texas*<sup>®</sup> jackpot is worth an estimated \$22 million.

For more information about the Texas Lottery<sup>®</sup>, please visit the official Web site at <http://www.txlottery.org>.

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**Note to Editors: A jpg-format photo of Edwina West is available by contacting Leticia Vásquez @ [leticia.vasquez@lottery.state.tx.us](mailto:leticia.vasquez@lottery.state.tx.us) or 512-344-5208.**