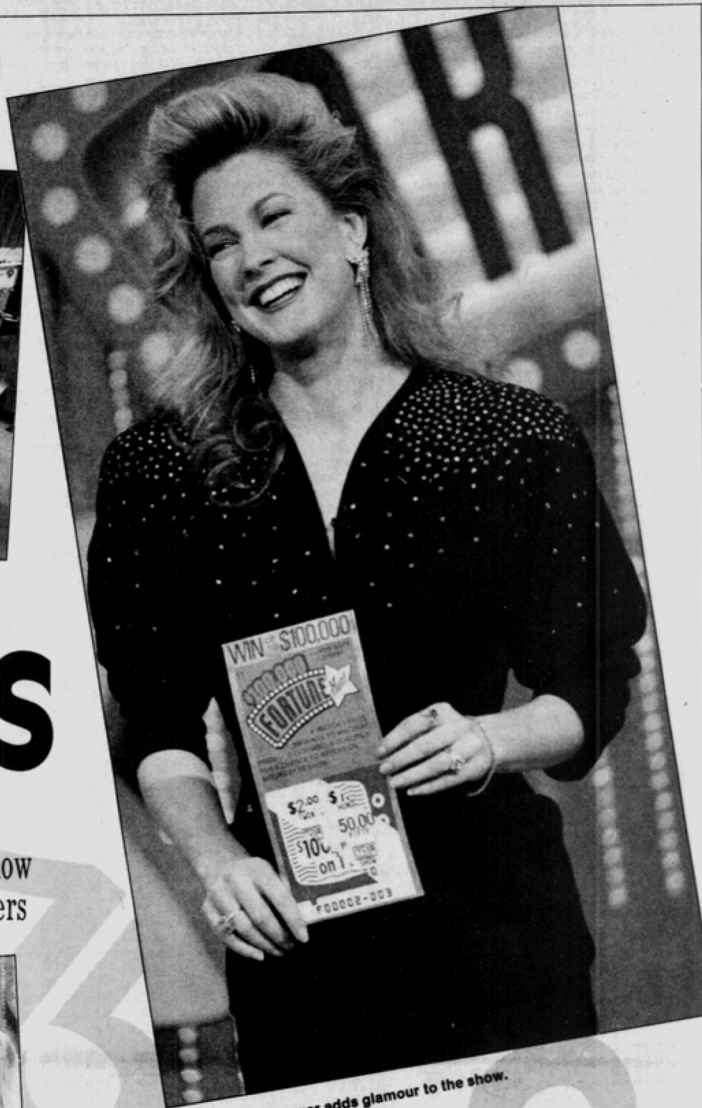




Wendy Malnak and Bill Leff warm up the studio audience which is filled with contestants' enthusiastic family members.



Linda May Kollmeyer adds glamour to the show.

# A NUMBERS GAME

Illinois State Lottery officials hope their TV show is the ticket to more players

By ANNE BURRIS GASIOR  
Daily Herald Staff Writer

At about 12:30 p.m. every Friday, a group of long limousines pulls up to the WGN-TV studios just off Addison Street in Chicago. When the doors of the luxurious cars open, no stars emerge. Just six ordinary men and women.

They walk into the studios and are ushered down a hall, past the familiar set where Bozo conducts the grand prize game and onto the hot pink, neon blue and yellow set where they will meet this intimidating world called television. Here they are briefed and encouraged to relax.

But how can they relax, when in a few hours they will face a trio of TV cameras, hot lights, a live audience and the chance to leave the studio \$100,000 richer?

These everyday people are to be contestants on Chicago's only locally produced game show, "The \$100,000 Fortune Hunt." They have been given their chance at fame and fortune through chance, luck or, more accurately, the Illinois State Lottery.

The contestants are at their podiums. They stand, listening intently as they are given their instructions. The lone woman in the group is spunky Mariene. She's confident of a win. They banter with the hosts, becoming fast friends. The audience members are led in, and warmed up with jokes. They learn their cues. They know that when their leader's arms hit the air, they are to clap wildly. It won't be hard. They are naturally enthusiastic, since most of them are related to one of the contestants.

Lottery Director Sharon Sharp sees "The \$100,000 Fortune Hunt" game as one more



Co-host Jeff Coopwood provides much of the show's comic relief.

gift to longtime lottery players and a way to attract new players. Though it's not exactly "Jeopardy," or even "Concentration," Sharp says, "it makes the lottery very visible and it brings out the entertainment format. It's a good vehicle for people to become familiar with the lottery."

A handful of other states already have lottery game shows. Illinois' version is co-sponsored by WGN-TV (Channel 9), which picks up virtually all of the expenses. Just in the last



Dan LaFauce receives his check from Lottery Director Sharon Sharp.

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