

Lottery TV show looks like a winner

By Robert Davis

"Rosanne" seems to be safe, and "The Cosby Show" doesn't have much to worry about up there at the top of the television ratings, but "The \$100,000 Fortune Hunt," the Illinois Lottery's new entry into the show business racket, has gotten underway.

Show business isn't pretty, of course, and the Friday afternoon taping of the half-hour show which debuted at 6:30 p.m. Saturday took nearly an hour and a half before it was completed.

And not without a few glitches.

The winner of the \$100,000 grand prize was from Missouri; the first few minutes of the show were interrupted by a ringing telephone; and absolutely nobody chose the squares in the game board that had all of the little gimmicks and special prizes that had been so meticulously planned.

Still, host Jeff Coopwood didn't miss a beat, even when two contestants tied for first place, forcing a runoff. Linda May Kollmeyer, the evening-gown-clad cohost, managed to turn the numbers on the game board without a hitch. And the audience of family members and friends responded with genuine enthusiasm, even though they had to wait for long periods of time while technical problems



Tribune photo by Michael Fryer

Contestants (from left) Denise Goad, of Woodstock; Nick Idrizi, of Kenosha; James Weitekamp, of Harvel, Ill.; Ralph Meir, of St.

Louis; Roger Nelson, of Moline; and Richard Marston, of Arlington Heights get instructions for "The \$100,000 Fortune Hunt."

were ironed out.

When broadcast on television, it seemed as natural and spontaneous as any other game show.

And when it was all over in the studios of WGN television on the city's North Side, the six contestants, chosen in a new lottery game introduced earlier this month, seemed to be happy with the results. Nobody won less than \$1,000 in cash or prizes and even the audience members got out with a box of microwave popcorn

apiece and a garish neon-pink baseball cap.

Les Roberts, a Chicago native who now lives on the West Coast, where he writes novels and produces television game shows for a living, is the executive producer of the new lottery show. Roberts, one of the people who originally unleashed "Hollywood Squares" on the television world, has developed lottery television game shows in Michigan and Ohio, but he conceded before Friday's

taping that each one holds hidden surprises.

One surprise during the premiere show this week was the nonchalance of Ralph Meier, 48, a St. Louis salesman, who showed up for the taping all by himself Friday because his wife, Jean, couldn't get time off from her art director's job in St. Louis and his four kids were in school.

"I'm sure she'll be happy when

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