



READY FOR THE 9th Annual Rabbits Unlimited Rabbit Hunt on Saturday, Feb. 5, were Bell family members Hank, Don, Greg, Jerry, Glen and Hannah. The hunt and post-hunt party at the Railroad Station in Saukville is expected to raise more than \$22,000 for the National Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Photo by Sam Arendt

Hunting event takes aim at MS

■ *Town family has been hosting fund-raising rabbit hunt for 9 years*

By CAROL POMEDAY

Ozaukee Press staff

It's probably the most unique fundraiser for the Wisconsin Chapter of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, but it certainly is successful.

In the past eight years, the Bell family of the Town of Saukville has raised more than \$200,000 for the MS Society at its annual Rabbits Unlimited Rabbit Hunt. They received the prestigious Mission Driver Award from the National MS Society for their efforts.

The ninth annual hunt will be held Saturday, Feb. 5. A post-hunt party will be at the Railroad Station in Saukville, where there will be music, games, food, raffles and silent and live auctions.

Three-person teams hunt for rabbits in the morning, then register their rabbits at the Railroad Station between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m.

For each rabbit registered, the team receives one lottery ticket. The daily limit is three rabbits per hunter, so a successful team can get nine lottery tickets. The winning teams will be chosen in a drawing. Half of the registration fees will go to the MS Society and the other half to the winning teams.

The registration fee, which includes food and beer, is \$60 for a returning team or \$225 for a new team.

The entry fee will be waived if the team sells at least 100 tickets for a raffle with a \$1,000 top prize. Tickets are \$5 each, three for \$10 or seven for \$25.

"That gives them incentive to sell tickets," said Greg Bell, who coordinates the hunt with his wife Dina, father Jerry and uncles Glen and Don Bell.

The Bell family has been featured in *Ozaukee Press* for its deer-hunting prowess and love of the sport.

But hunting bunnies, even though they are plentiful and decimate gardens and plants, may seem a bit unsporting to some.

"Trust me, it isn't easy," Greg said. "They (hunters) can't use a shotgun with buckshot, which makes it a little more interesting. They can only use a .22 caliber rifle, pellet gun or bow."

Hunters who are 69 years or older can use a shotgun. Children can participate with BB guns. Greg and Dina's children, Hank, 10, and Hannah, 12, plan to try their luck.

The rabbit meat will be given to a charitable organization, Dina said.

The hunt originated on Greg and Dina's Town of Saukville property, which has a large wooded area that provides plenty of shelter for bunnies.

One cold January day, Greg invited friends to shoot rabbits. They had so much fun that the next year 26 friends showed

up, so they divided into teams and had a competition.

"I remember one team came back with a pink stuffed rabbit it shot, and that got me thinking," Don Bell said. "Why not make it a fundraiser for the MS Society?"

Two of Don's children died from complications of MS. Rick was 41 and Margie was 48 after battling the disease 12 and 24 years, respectively.

Last year, the hunt raised \$22,000. The Bells hope this year's hunt tops that.

More than 100 items are in the silent and live auctions, including guns, bows and arrows, hunting stands, blaze orange and camouflage clothing, hunting and sports equipment, sports memorabilia, tickets to Milwaukee Brewers and Green Bay Packers games and gift certificates to local businesses.

The deadline for registering a team is Tuesday, Feb. 1.

Non-hunters may attend the event for \$20. There is no charge for children ages 12 and younger, but anyone under age 21 must be accompanied by a parent.

Raffle tickets are available at the Railroad Station, 200 S. Railroad St.; McCarthy's Pub, 3315 Hwy. I, Town of Saukville; or from any Rabbits Unlimited member.

Registration forms and more information are available on the Web site www.rabbitsunlimited.org or call Greg Bell at 284-2747.