

A bit o' luck for a good cause

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The Rev. Dennis Blaney has a tough job ahead of him. He has to hide 27 ceramic leprechauns over the 184 acres of land that make up the Fair Meadows community, just outside of Rolling Prairie. The founder and presi-

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■ The sixth annual Leprechaun Hunt

will be from noon to 6 p.m. Sunday at Sharing Meadows on LaPorte County Road 300 East, two miles north of U.S. 20.

Admission is \$40 in advance or \$45 at the gate. Children ages 17 and younger are free with an adult. For information, call (219) 778-2585 or e-mail share@niiia.net.

dent of the Share Foundation is busy preparing for the sixth annual Leprechaun Hunt, the organization's largest fund-raiser, which will take place Sunday.

Each of the 18-inch green elves will contain a certain amount of "gold" and the lucky hunter will stumble upon a \$1,000 stash hidden in one of the statues.



GREGG GEARHART / THE TIMES

The Rev. Dennis Blaney has hid the leprechauns for a Sunday charity hunt at Sharing Meadow in Rolling Prairie.

"I'm wearing heavy pants because of the thorns," Blaney says.

It may be worth enduring a few pricks if it means finding the jackpot. If not, there are plenty of other activities to keep parents and children entertained, including boating and fishing, and hay wagon and draft horse rides.

The day also is known for its selection of food. Tents will be stocked with roast lamb, barbecue ribs, chicken and, of course, corn beef and cabbage. For dessert, 200 loafs of zucchini bread topped with blueberries.

Blaney, who began the Share Foundation 20 years ago, refers to the residents of Fair Meadows as other-abled rather than mentally handicapped.

"There are all kinds of names," notes Blaney. "But other-abled means they do have a lot of abilities. Personality wise, they're as good as anyone else."

The Share Foundation opened its first home in 1994 for residents 18 and older. Today there are six homes and the foundation is working toward building 15. Each one houses two residents and one supervisor.

Blaney's interest has always lied in assisting other-abled citizens. When he joined the Diocese of Gary 40 years ago, Blaney was disturbed by the lack of attention given to the other-abled community. He started as pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Health in Hammond and began holding conferences with parents of other-abled students.

"I was told that they got no support," Blaney recalls. "The school systems have changed a great deal. At one time if you were a teacher of special education other teachers wouldn't sit next to you in the cafeteria."

Originally, Blaney hosted a group of other-abled people at his house as a test.

"They showed that they could live together and become a Christian community," he says.

Now that he has created his own other-abled community, Blaney hopes that it will grow to house 45 residents. The houses are built in threes every four years. "Now it's just a question of money and personnel," he says.

The Leprechaun Hunt will certainly help that cause. Kathleen Kelly, the foundation's executive director, forecasts that the fund-raiser will generate \$50,000.