



Raffle ticket sales champs have lucky edge

By Hillary Wundrow
Daily News staff writer

ROCKTON - One notorious sweepstaker swept into Rockton to help sell 624-Rock Raffle tickets. Harriet Brown, 80, and Stanley Stark, 98, sold a total of 60 tickets together.

"I'm a bit of a gambler," Brown admitted.

The Rockton Chamber of Commerce's biggest fund-raiser of the year, the 624 Rock Raffle kicked off on May 1. Tickets, attached to coupon books, went on sale for \$20.

In August, the Rockton Chamber of Commerce will give away a total of \$10,500. Approximately \$100 will be raffled off daily, with \$500 raffled off on Fridays. There will be \$1,000 raffled off on Aug. 15 and the grand prize of \$5,000 will be raffled off on Aug. 31.

"It's a good deal if someone thinks about it. You have 30 chances to win for \$20," Brown said.

Brown should know a good deal when she sees one. She has spent most of her life entering sweepstakes and racking up prizes. Brown stays away from casinos, but has cast her lot in just about every other kind of contest.

When she was young, Brown entered advertorial essay contests and won first place in a contest to describe Coca-Cola, noting the soda was as good as a lobster tail at the Wagon Wheel.

Brown kept winning prizes here and there while working as an executive secretary at Hamilton Sundstrand. When she retired, however, she really started to hit the jackpot.

In 2000 she won a Ford Explorer from Coca Cola. Over the next few years she would collect a prize of \$10,000, a trip to Mexico from Hershey's, a computer from Toys "R" Us and a Panasonic TV and \$1,000 catering package from Jack Daniel's.

She also scored a trip to Beverly Hills from a contest with Nordstrom's Ike Behar Shirts. As part of the prize, she was able to attend the premier of the movie "Poseidon."

"We stayed at the Beverly Hills Hilton. We stayed for the after party and that was fun," Brown said.

Brown is so fanatical she recently attended the National Convention of Sweepstakers in Dearborn, Mich. She won more than \$700 in stamps and \$500 worth of scratch off lottery tickets.

Although she's scored plenty of prizes, Brown said that isn't why she does it.

"The main reason for entering sweepstakes is to have something to look forward to," Brown said. "By entering sweepstakes you never know what the next mail will bring and you always have something to look forward to. Every now and then you can win a prize."

Brown keeps a closet full of presents on hand for friends and relatives and has even donated a washing machine to her church, Alpine Lutheran.

"I've won about 95 prizes this year so far. If I can't use the prizes I give them away," Brown said.

She has used her experiences to write a book, "The Winning Road." Her experiences have also landed her on the Oprah Winfrey Show.

Despite all her success, Brown doesn't consider herself lucky. She attributes her good fortune to the three P's - patience, persistence and postage.

She devotes at least a couple hours a day to entering contests and meets regularly with her gambling group, the Rockford Sweepers to share ideas and information. She subscribes to the Sweep Sheet, a newsletter with more than 30 new sweepstakes to enter every month. When not licking stamps, she combs the Internet for contests.

Brown's advice for those wanting to enter sweepstakes is to not expect a prize for about eight months.

"It's a wonderful hobby, but you can't do it for a month and expect to win," Brown said.

For those not willing to devote much time, Brown advises listening to radio stations for sweepstake and looking at the backs of soft drink bottles.

"Keep your eyes open and you'll see them," Brown said. "There are 20 people in Rockford Sweepers but visitors are welcome. If we hear about something we'll share it."

For advise on entering sweepstakes, Brown said people can e-mail her at hbrown2211@insightbb.com.

For more information on ghe 624 Rock Raffle, call (815)624-7625 or visit the chamber's Web site at www.rocktonchamber.com.