

Rural Bradford township looks at law change

BY JANE BRESEE
Staff Correspondent

ULSTER — The beautiful Susquehanna River borders the east of Ulster Township, Bradford County, but the township has been dry for 40 years. Dry, that is, because the people have repeatedly voted down permission to sell alcoholic beverages within the domain.

The people will have the choice

again at the May 19 primary, and the referendum has caused no small stir in the community.

Jack Bishop, presently an Ulster township supervisor, and owner of Bishop's Restaurant at the edge of the little town of Ulster, circulated petitions to have the local option put on the Primary ballot.

Bishop reasoned that he wants to build a 30 by 30 foot addition to his present dining room where he

caters to a breakfast and lunch trade and serves dinners from 5 until 9 p.m. with legal beverages.

There would be no alcohol served during the day nor would he want to run a tap room, Bishop insists. He wants to keep it a family restaurant.

A protest seeking to remove the question from the ballot was filed by group called "Citizens for Better Community Living".

Mrs. Thelma Wright, spokeswoman for the group explained, "It is not the purpose of the Citizens Committee for Better Community Living to come against any one individual. We are so aware of the harm, heartaches, and destruction booze brings, that our purse is to keep it from being brought into our own community."

Mrs. Wright, and her co-chairperson, Mrs. Evelyn Stowell, alleged that a number of the signatures on the Bishop's petitions were invalid. Some were not registered voters in the township, and some did not become registered until after signing the petition, they said.

There were also alleged to be duplicate signatures on the petitions.

Mrs. Wright and Mrs. Stowell obtained the services of a lawyer, a resident of Ulster township, to oppose the petition for the liquor and malt beverage license, but the judge ruled on a technicality that Jack Bishop had not been properly informed that his petitions were being contested. Therefore, the local option will be printed on the ballot for the citizens to make a choice.

At a recent meeting of the Citizens for Better Community Living, Mrs. Wright told the group of 35 people present that she had met with the Bradford County Commissioners to ask them why they themselves did not throw out the petition which had been improperly signed.

According to Mrs. Wright, the

Commissioners told her that they did not have time to inspect over 500 petitions of those running in the Primary election; and that the citizens have a right to see the petitions and protest if they think they are illegal.

Many in the group expressed their desire to hire legal counsel to see if the Commissioners are legally bound to inspect each petition before the ballots are printed, but after considering the cost of lawyer fees and the short time before the primary election, they decided to drop that aspect of the protest for the time being.

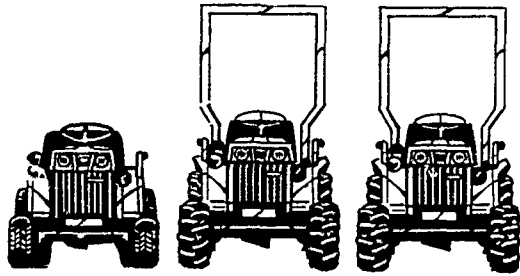
During the meeting, Miss Gladys Reeves of Milan acted as secretary and Mr. Dan Boehm of Saco was elected treasurer. A budget of \$300 was set to cover the cost of mailing two letters to each voter, and other publicity. A plan of action was implemented to register people to vote, provide transportation to the polls, to have poll watchers, and volunteers to stand outside the voting places to urge people to vote "dry".

Mrs. Wright also explained that they had obtained advisory help from the Pennsylvania Council on Alcohol Problems whose offices are in Harrisburg.

Ulster Township with a population of 1327 is fast changing from a farming community to a bedroom community. The last appearing for a liquor license failed in 1973.

The question remains: What will the citizens of Ulster Township decide this time?

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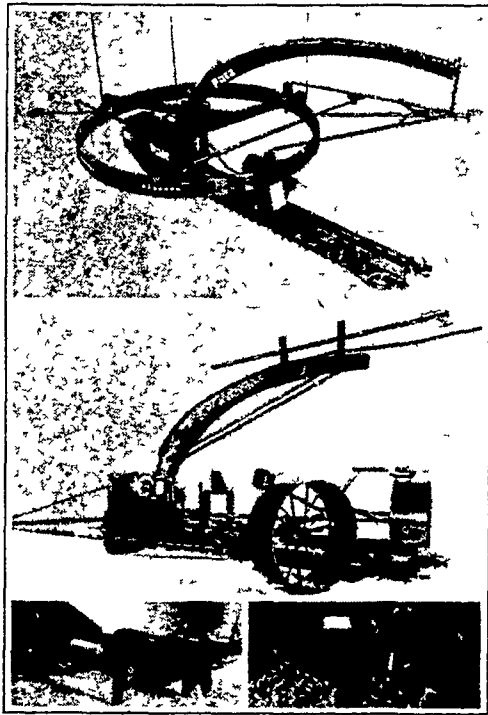


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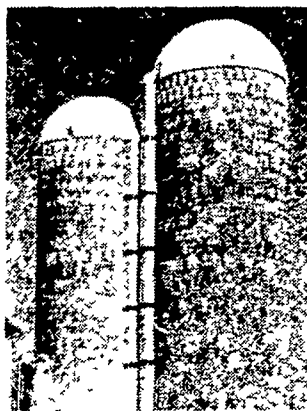
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