

## Slate painting

(Continued from Page B2)

order. Customers can also choose from a selection on display. The signs feature a mailbox surrounded by flowers and sometimes a small animal like a mouse hidden among the flowers. If a customer selects a sign from the display, Grace or Sandy will paint the desired name on it.

McConnell's Mills, located in the Slippery Rock area, is another popular scene with customers. Most of the pictures standing on easels or on the barnwood paneling in the gallery have farm oriented themes.

In the front of their gallery is a picnic table that Sandy's husband, Bill, made for them. The table has yet to host a picnic, but it has seen plenty of painting.

Sandy quips, "He will ask me, you taking good care of that table? No paint on it? Keeping it covered with a tablecloth?"

"Well let's just say that the top now has a special design and I'm sure that he really won't mind," Sandy continues.

Both Sandy and Grace agree that the trickiest part of creating slate paintings is putting the hole in the slate after the painting is completed. First they beat the slate into the shape they want and then they paint the design.

When the painting is completed, they spray it with a varnish. This procedure has two purposes — to give it a shine and to make it easier

to clean. A piece of leather is added to make hanging the picture easier.

The canvas paintings can be attractively framed by the artists or the customer can do it himself. Sandy and Grace will stretch the canvas to suit the customer's needs.

Works from the Countryside Gallery are also displayed at the Horn of Plenty Restaurant located on Route 8, in Valencia. Twice a year Grace and Sandy completely redecorate the restaurant with 36 paintings. This helps two businesses at the same time. The restaurant gets free decorations and the artists sell some of their paintings.

Some of the paintings are changed weekly to give the restaurant a fresh, new look.

Grace and Sandy also teach classes so folks can come to their gallery and get two hours of personal attention once a week. Lots of beginners attend and ages have ranged from 25 to 60, including both men and women.

Classes are kept light so the students enjoy them, yet still learn. Grace says: "It is not to be a serious impression, but a relaxing time."

Sandy adds, "We take no more than 10, usually eight." The classes are cancelled over the holiday season.

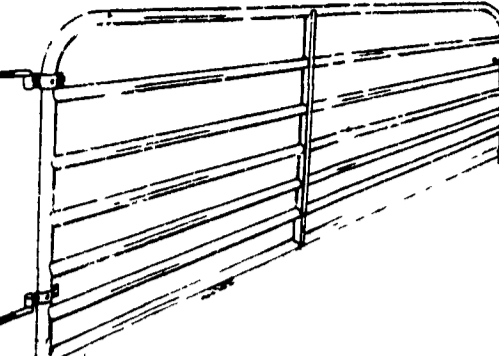
Grace and Sandy always seem to

have work lined up for them. After the holidays they'll be working on a special order for one of their customers.

If you happen to pass through western Pennsylvania, you're likely to see some of the cousins' country designs. When you see

them, you'll know they've come from "The Countryside Gallery" and they'll be signed by Sandy or Grace.

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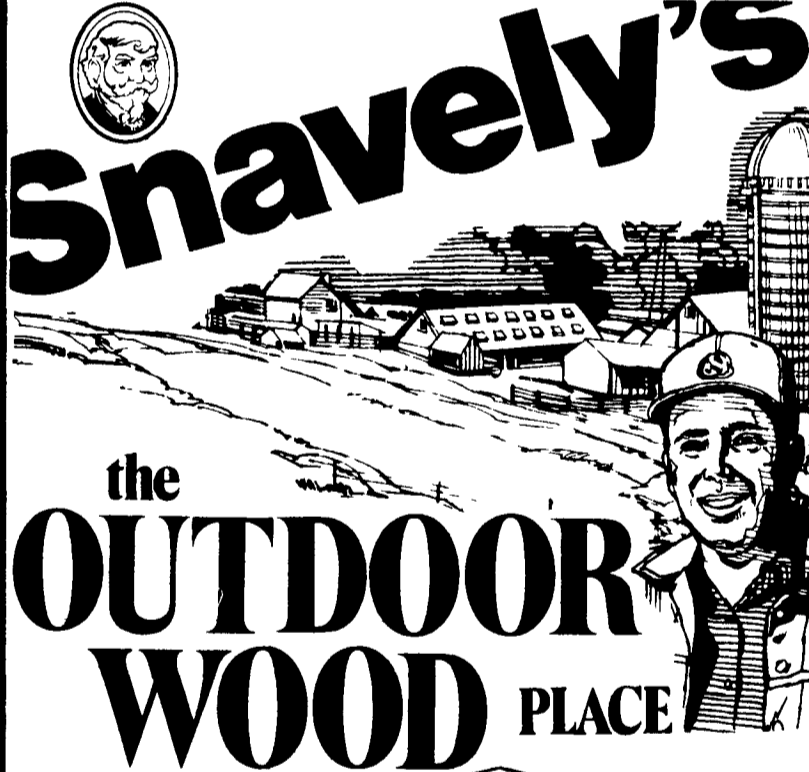
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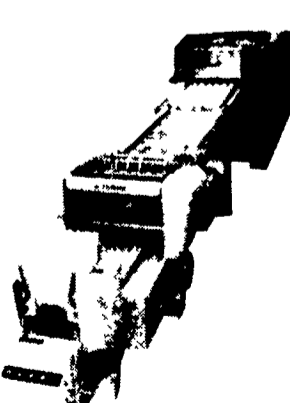
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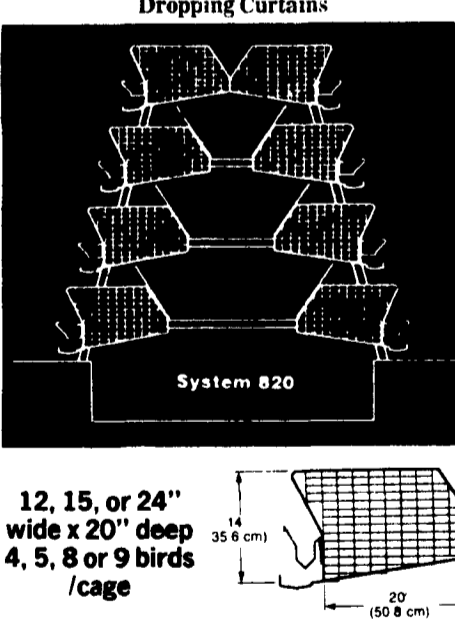


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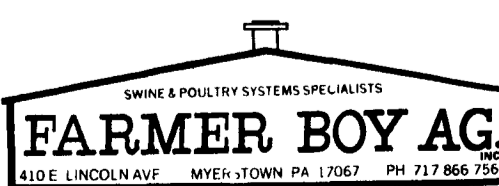
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