



God, Grant Me SERENITY ...

Above: Ivan Coe, executive director of Serenity Farms. Right: Carol, a resident of 11 months, prepares lunch for residents and staff.

raising and "getting acquainted," featured a live pig raffle, games, antiques and pony rides. It was held Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 7 and 8.

The rules of the house are simple. No drinking is allowed and a person must commit himself to the program while he is detoxified. A minimum residency of 60 days is recommended and members can only leave the farms when accompanied by staff personnel. Supportive services and counseling also are available to persons who do not require resident services.

Of the 115 residents who have entered the 60-day program during the four years since its inception, 57 per cent have sustained sobriety. "But if they fall off, they don't start completely over, they still have the basics," said Guy Vlasits, administrative director.

These basics, Ivan frequently admits, are cliches patterned after the 12 steps of AA although AA has no official affiliation with Serenity Farms. "Live and Let Live." "But for the Grace of God." "First things first."

What the alcoholics must realize, Ivan stressed is that they would not be able to shun that first drink except that they rely on a power greater than themselves.

Gathered in the sunny dining room for the daily counseling and therapy sessions, the residents talked about their life at Serenity Farms. Carol, who has learned the previously unsurmountable tasks of cooking and housework, has hopes of becoming a secretary. Behind the calm composure is a story of a young adulthood filled with drugs, alcohol and arrests that add up to two years behind bars.

"I never trusted anyone before I came here. But I learned that people really do care. There's so much more here than learning how to not drink; I'm learning how to live," Carol said quietly.

Bob likes to sit on the veranda because the spectacular view reminds him of his own home. After 3 1/2 weeks of sobriety, he can see colors again and read the newspaper. "It's a pleasure," Bob said who started his history of drinking on home brew during the depression. "Now I have a little more spirit, things seem a little brighter," he said.

The building block and staff that provided the name for the farms is the Serenity Prayer. Its simple message is found in nearly every room of the house.

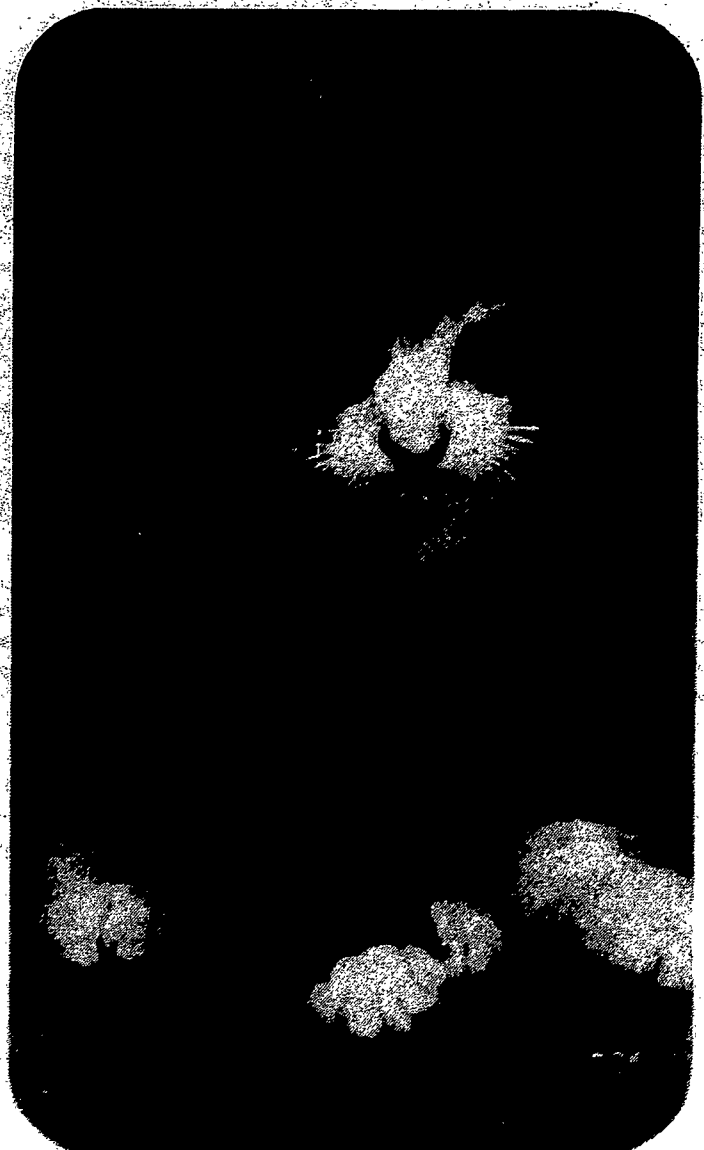
"God grant me the SERENITY to accept the things I cannot change; COURAGE to change the things I can; and WISDOM to know the difference."



Ivan [far right] appears stumped on the whys of alcoholism at a daily counseling session. Bob, Guy Vlasits, administrative director, and Carol join the discussion.



Sister Mary Kruckow, a member of the Livingston Steuben task force of the Office of Human Development confers with Frances Coe, assistant resident manager, on the projects for the annual fall festival. Serenity Farms received a \$500 grant from the Campaign for Human Development.



One of the latest farm residents.