

panel favors vermont bottle bill

By GINNI JONES

The problems of the Vermont Bottle Bill and possible solutions were discussed by a panel sponsored by the League of Women Voters on September 26 in the Haley Library. Although the panel members are affected by the bill differently, they agreed that Vermont should have a bottle bill, and that the best solution to their problems is the institution of a national law requiring standardized returnable bottles.

The panel members were: Senator Arthur Gibb from Weybridge; Jim Finneran, a Vermont beer distributor; Lee Kilbur, a Coca-Cola distributor; Bob Emilo, owner of Emilio's Delicatessen; Bud Smith, owner of Bud's Market; Larry Provost, owner of Larry's Rubbish Removal; Kate Taylor for the Rutland League of Women Voters; and Frank Winkler, physics professor at Middlebury College. Mae Brown, chairman of the League's Environmental Quality Committee, was the panel moderator.

Senator Gibb described the current legislation, and gave its history. The present law requires a 5¢ deposit on all beer and soft drink containers. This law has reduced the roadside litter, claimed Gibb, but it has "made the grocer into a garbage man." Instead of recycling the cans, they are simply sent to a landfill. Kilbur added that for every 100 cans he sent out, he was getting 104 back because children were digging them out of dumps.

Senator Gibb also described the Lloyd Amendments which were defeated by the Vermont Senate last year. The Lloyd Amendments required state redemption centers, a ban on flip-top cans, and encouraged "certified" returnable bottles which can be used by more than one manufacturer. These certified bottles would have a lower deposit than other containers. Gibb plans to propose similar amendments again this year to make the Vermont bill similar to the Oregon Bill.

Jim Finneran stated the objectives of the Bottle Bill: litter reduction, a solution to the solid-waste problem, and energy and resource conservation. Finneran said that these objectives have not been met. Although he admitted that the amount of



Bottle banners and can canners discuss discardables.

road-side litter has decreased, he suggested that it is because of an increased incentive to pick up litter, not a decrease in littering. Finneran said that there has been energy conservation only "to the degree we have gone to a fully returnable bottle."

As a solution to the problems of the Bottle Bill, Finneran suggested that the interested parties should meet in a "reasonable atmosphere" to discuss the

objectives and how to obtain them. He feels the issue has become too emotional; it is "out of the arena of logic."

Bob Emilo and Bud Smith described the grocers' problems with the Bottle Bill. One major difficulty is finding space to store the returned bottles. Emilo had to eliminate several brand name beers in order to have more storage room. In this way, he became less competitive

"because we didn't have what everybody wanted."

Another problem, according to Smith, is that he sells 68 different types of bottles and cans. As a result, it is difficult for his employees to remember which containers can be returned there, and he sometimes gets containers of brands he does not sell. A related problem is people mixing out-of-state bottles with Vermont deposit bot-

continued on p. 11

housing projects planned for midd and vergennes

By HOPE ROSHETAR

Two housing developments geared to the needs of moderate to low-income families are in the offing for two sites in Middlebury and Vergennes. They are part of a statewide project sponsored by the New England Non-Profit Housing Development Corporation with additional funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Developments and the Vermont State Housing Authority. The Middlebury and Vergennes projects, plus two in St. Albans and Newport, will be

built by Flanders Lumber and Building Supply.

In Middlebury, the 28 houses will be built in an area near Means Woods off Washington Street Extension. The owners of the development, called Peterson Heights, plan to offer the town part of the land near the woods, thereby cutting the size of the lots required by town ordinance from 29,000 to 10,000 square feet.

The need for low-income housing is admitted by members of the Town

Planning Committee. There is, however, some concern over whether the town's sewer system is capable of handling the development. Concern was also expressed over the adequacy of school and road facilities.

These concerns are also apparent in Vergennes, with the Booth Woods project. In addition, there is some controversy over whether the developers need Planning Commission approval under Act 250 of the Environmental Law. The site

continued on p. 2

bottle ban...

continued from p. 1

tles. Since the deposit is not labeled uniformly on all bottles, distributors do not have time to check for the deposit label, and therefore are being "burned" Emilo said.

Smith and Emilo agreed that the best solution to their problems would be a national standard returnable bottle, used by all beer and soft drink manufacturers. Their suggestions for Vermont were to get rid of cans entirely, to lower the deposit to 2¢ to become more competitive along border states, to increase public awareness, and to limit the hours during which the store owner must redeem bottles. Another suggestion was to have state-run or free-enterprise redemption centers.

Provost said that the Bottle Bill has caused "no problems" for rubbish

haulers. He believed that voluntary recycling would not be successful, and suggested recycling at the landfill.

Professor Winkler disagreed, saying that in a rural area, voluntary action is best. He explained that the various methods for recycling materials and energy are only feasible on a large scale. He said, "this more or less rules out the entire state of Vermont."

Composting is one form of energy recycling possible for Vermont, but Winkler quickly added, "the market for compost is rather soft."

Kate Taylor described a voluntary recycling project in Bennington. This did not seem to be possible in Rutland, however. An outside firm will be hired by Rutland to manage their landfill, with the condition that 20% of the refuse, by weight, will be recycled.