

# The Post-Register

## The political pulse

B-6

Idaho Falls, Idaho, Sunday, Nov. 23, 1980

Bonneville sideviews . . .

## Sudden wine license approval smart move

BY BEN J. PLASTINO  
Post-Register political editor

The sudden reversal by the Bonneville County Board of Commissioners Wednesday for prompt licensure of retail wine sales, including wine by the drink in beer bars, was a smart move on their part.

Whether or not retail wine sales are good for Bonneville County was no longer an issue. This was settled by the yes votes of more than 55 percent of county voters on Nov. 4.

Commission Chairman Clyde A. Burtenshaw, and Commissioners A. Wylie Snarr and Tom Loertscher appeared to have been dragging their feet on setting up the machinery for licensing over wine in the store initially.

\* \* \*

**By the delays, the commissioners were leaving themselves open to the charge that they were seeking to thwart the will of the majority of the people. They were also depriving legitimate grocers and beer tavern operators of wine sales revenue by the delay.**

The board was justified in contending most people didn't know the proposal also called for sale of wine by the drink in beer taverns and restaurants that do not hold state liquor licenses. . . The city and county apparently had the right to decide whether this should be permitted.

It's unfortunate this phase of the proposal was not better publicized. Grocers and beer tavern owners who handle beer sales must have both city and county licenses, in addition to the state licenses.

\* \* \*

**The board skirted dangerously close of failing to learn a lesson from what took place in the defeat of Bonneville County Sheriff Blaine Skinner in the Nov. 4 general election and also in the defeat of two county commissioners following the 1972 wine election.**

In 1972, it is recalled, the wine proposal was defeated, but two Republican commissioners,

Chairman Dean G. Huntsman and Orval Forbes, had shown such a hostile and procrastinating attitude toward retail wine proponents that it was considered one of the reasons for their defeat in the election following the expiration of their terms.

\* \* \*

**The Bonneville County Commissioners thus have narrowly avoided the same politically dangerous situation that took place following 1972 wine election.**

The earlier stalling actions of the Bonneville board was astonishing because the wine proposal passed in a record turnout of voters who otherwise balloted a strong conservative trend. That should have told the commissioners something.

Maybe this may end the story on wine which indirectly has been responsible for the defeat of three county officials, and it might have been more.

\* \* \*

**The city always has been willing to license retail wine sales as rapidly as possible, although they questioned, with some justification, wine-by-the-drink sales at beer taverns and restaurants that do not hold liquor licenses.**

The City Council took its licensing action Thursday night, with only Councilman Art Chandler casting a dissenting vote. His excuse that he thought the council should hold hearings before approving sale of wine by the drink in bars and restaurant places him in a precarious and lonely position. It also may have taken courage. All three county commissioners and the mayor and other five councilmen gave their approval, some obviously against their personal beliefs, but they took the proper view they should comply with wishes of the majority of the people.

**It also must be remembered it is possible to circulate petitions to now revoke the retail wine sales, although this appears improbable in view of the Nov. 4 election results.**