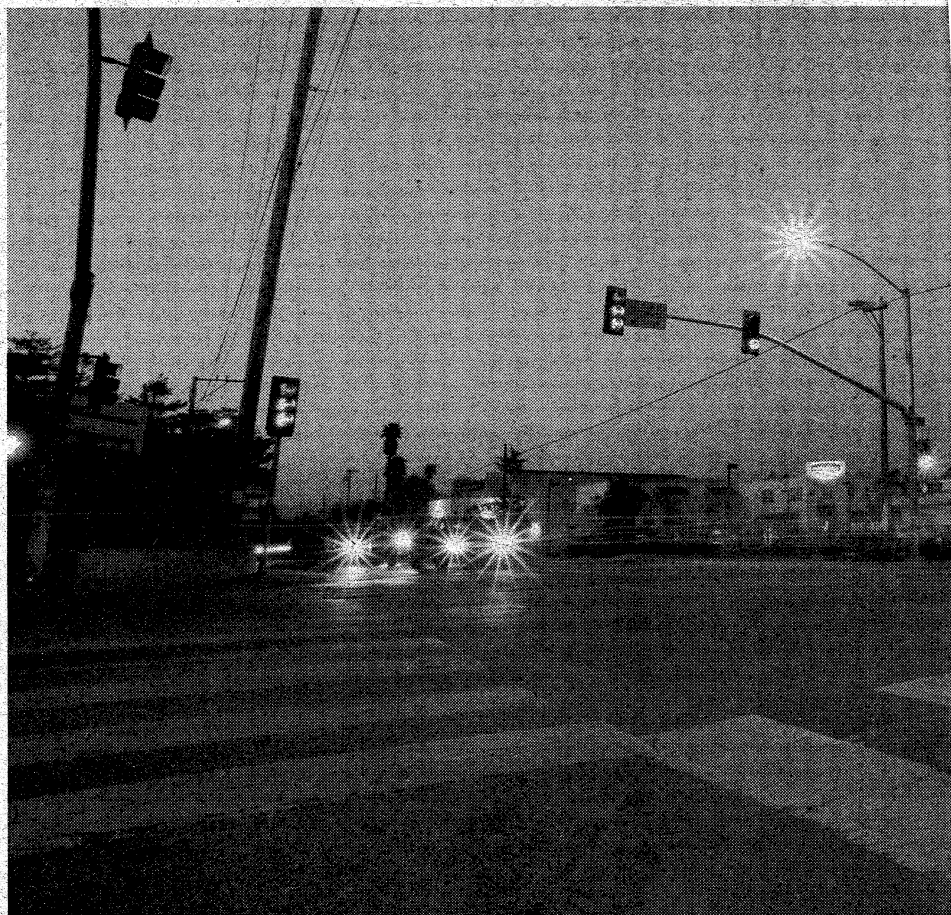


At the Crossroads

Next month, Live Oak will elect its first new representative in 20 years. Metro Santa Cruz asks the contenders to peer into their complex community's future. **BY STEVE HAHN**



CROSS TOO BARE The corner of 17th and Brommer is a fledgling business district with considerable potential.

LIVE OAK

Santa Cruz County would be utterly incomplete without Live Oak, yet the area makes do with the political equivalent of scrimping. Even though it boasts a population larger than Scotts Valley and Capitola combined, it has no city council or staff. It's represented by one lonely county supervisor, and even this political representative has other areas to worry about. When it comes time to get something done for Live Oak on the board, the District 1 supervisor must negotiate with four other supervisors, all of whom have their own constituents at the forefront of their minds. Briefly contrast that with the situation in the city of Santa Cruz, where the District 3 supervisor is joined by seven City Council

members, all fussing and worrying about one geographical area, and it's clear that the supervisor overseeing Live Oak will always have an overflowing cup.

This has been the delicate situation facing current Supervisor Jan Beautz for the past 20 years as Live Oak has continued its transition from a rural chicken-farming town to a bustling urban center, with all the associated growing pains. Now, Beautz is ready to let someone else have a whirl at sticking up for the overlooked district wedged between Capitola and Santa Cruz. Beautz acted as a strong, often outspoken, activist for the area's interests, with a particular emphasis on neighborhood preservation, and her shadow will no doubt loom large over whoever takes the helm following the June election.

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