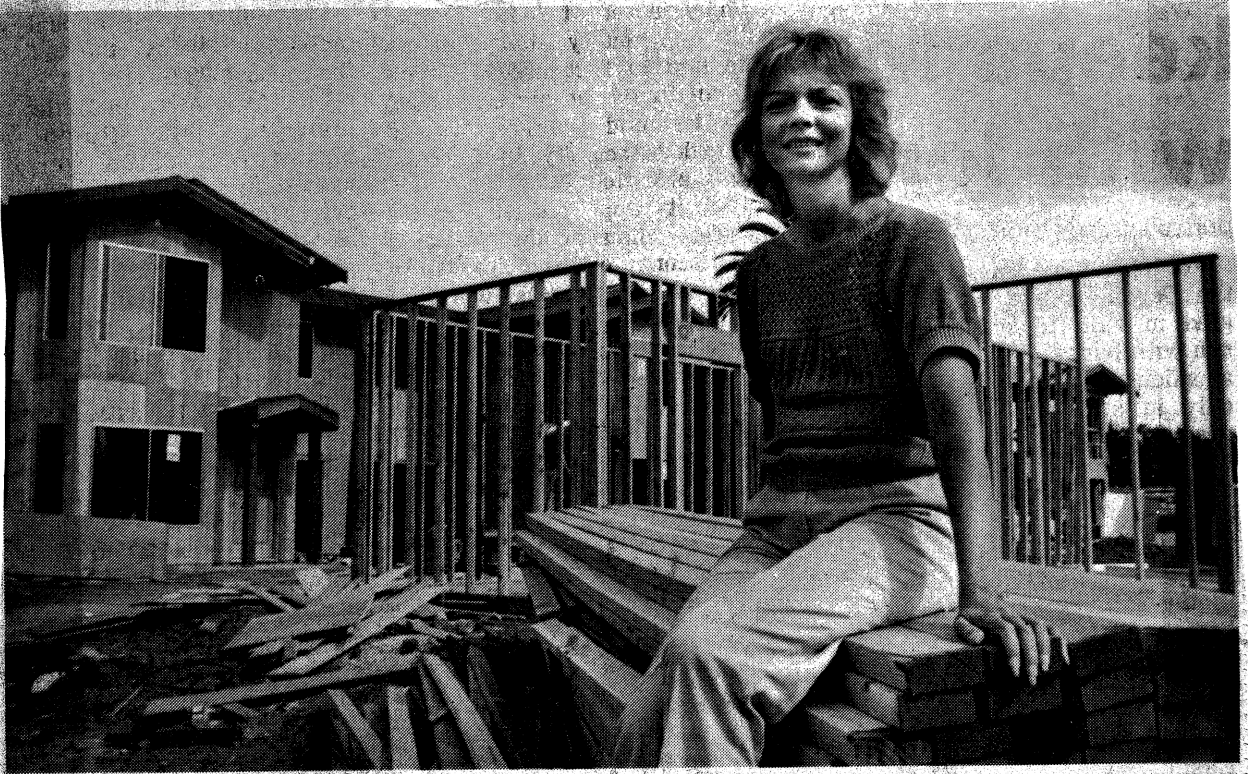


A 'lookout' for Live Oak



Kurt Ellison

Jan Beautz at site of project near 17th and Portola

She's leader of battle for preservation of Live Oak

By ADRIANA REYNERI
STAFF WRITER

Many say Live Oak, a once-rural patch between 41st Avenue and Santa Cruz harbor, falls in the "twilight zone" of local government.

But Jan Beautz — attorney, president of the Live Oak Community Assn., and past president of the Live Oak Little League — has been gently but persistently persuading local officials to respond to the problems facing her neighborhood.

A slight blonde who states her case softly, Beautz has become a familiar and increasingly authoritative figure at meetings of the local school board, the county Board of Supervisors, and those of various planning agencies.

Beautz started her involvement in community affairs about three years ago, as she was finishing her last year at the Monterey College of Law.

When Beautz and her family moved to Live Oak 10 years ago, "it was kind of funky, but not crowded," she said. "It was Sears, Orchard Supply and cows." (Since that time, Sears and Orchard Supply — though not the cows — have been annexed by the city of Capitola.)

But condominiums, townhouses and apartments began crowding the neighborhoods and the funk became less than charming. Problems such as the area's narrow country roads, filled with "inverse speed bumps," or potholes, and drainage systems that flooded with every heavy rain were becoming intolerable.

"One thing will catch your eye," Beautz said. "People look up and see things changing, a lot of big apartments going up, lots of traffic.

"Suddenly, something right next door gets to you. Then they get interested in what will happen in other areas, too. A lot of people became aware at the same time," Beautz said.

The Live Oak Community Assn. had been formed in 1981 to deal with the severe drainage problem, Beautz said. Now the association concentrates on problems its members say are the result of rapid growth and poor planning.

The group traces many of Live Oak's problems to Measure J, the county's "growth management" ordinance adopted by the voters in 1978. Among other things, Measure J requires that at least 15 percent of all new housing built in the unincorporated areas of the

county be "affordable" to persons of low or moderate income. By 1983, 80 percent of such development had been "dumped" into Live Oak, Beautz said.

"Now, it's not just a matter of starting (to solve problems resulting from growth), it's a matter of backing up," Beautz said. And, the costs of bringing adequate roads, storm drains and other improvements to Live Oak after-the-fact are "staggering," she said.

Nonetheless, the Live Oak

Community Assn. has made several strides in the past few years, Beautz said. They include persuading the county to draw up a list of capital improvement projects, update its capital improvements plan, and prepare an urban services report that shows specifically how "grossly deficient" Live Oak is in basic services.

"Once these things become fact (by being pinpointed in a report), it becomes harder for the government to justify what they're doing," Beautz said. "Some of it they don't want to deal with."

Another victory has been in changing provisions in Measure J that allowed developers to