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LOCAL-G tells its side of cityhood

(Second of three articles on midcounty incorporation)

By MARY BARNETT

Two main reasons for seeking to incorporate Live Oak as a separate city are given by the leaders of LOCAL-G (Live Oak Citizens Aligned for Local Government).

They are local autonomy and low taxes.

The leaders place different emphases on the two main reasons for wanting Live Oak to be a city all by itself.

George and Betty Ward, who live in a picturesque part of Live Oak on Lakeview Drive and own the Capitola Hotel, tend to emphasize the importance of local control.

The Wards lived for 20 years in the Santa Clara Valley, and watched "progress" gobble up orchards surrounding their once-rural home. They don't want it to happen to Live Oak. They feel that as citizens they would have more to say about a small community than a big one.

"You know the difference between council meetings in a big city and a little one," Mrs. Ward said. "You know how cute they are in Capitola."

The Wards rarely miss a Capitola council meeting, take a keen interest in the proceedings and usually have some comment to make.

"We have one supervisor assigned to this area, but there is

a need for him to compromise with four others," Ward said. "We want five councilmen determining what is good for Live Oak."

Ward thinks that Live Oak is the typical dwelling place of the "silent majority." He would like to see it given a voice.

Dominic J. (Jeff) Mauro, president of LOCAL-G and a lineman for Pacific Gas and Electric Co., and Mrs. Barbara White, LOCAL-G secretary, are also concerned with local control but put more emphasis on keeping taxes down.

They believe that the best way to do this is to incorporate Live Oak as a minimum-service city of the type of Scotts Valley, which has no tax rate.

"We have patterned ourselves after Scotts Valley," Mauro said.

LOCAL-G proposes a city of approximately 14,600 with an estimated annual budget of approximately \$556,000, and no property tax.

The government and services would be financed entirely by sales taxes, gasoline taxes, motor vehicle in-lieu taxes, various other state subventions and grants, fines, permits, and licenses.

Mauro said there are 27 cities in the state that have no property tax, and if they can do it, so can Live Oak.

Mrs. White was particularly unhappy about statements that LOCAL-G is depending upon

revenues from Sears Roebuck and other stores in the Sutter Hill shopping complex at 41st Ave.

She emphasized that in its projection of revenues, LOCAL-G includes no income from this source.

"We took our sales tax figures from present revenues as reported by the State Board of Equalization."

She presented a document to show that county officials in their report on the Live Oak incorporation proposal included \$90,000 for Sears revenues. LOCAL-G crossed this amount out and did not include it in its income estimate.

One vocal incorporation opponent is supposed to have referred to LOCAL-G as "a little group of high pressure political extremists."

However, they seemed far from that as they sat in the living room of the Ward's comfortable, modest home, sipping tea, munching cookies and chatting about how they got started on their venture of trying to make a city out of Live Oak.

Mauro explained that he and Mrs. White were both in the Live Oak Improvement Association about two years ago. They found that both of them were interested in the Live Oak incorporation idea but found no support from others in the association.

"This was about the time that the mid-county report was prepared by the students at

UCSC, recommending a mid-county city," Mauro said.

"The Live Oak Improvement Association grabbed it, and surmised that the students did a good enough job to ignore the incorporation of Live Oak;" (The report found this not feasible for fiscal reasons.)

"I wasn't satisfied, and I knew others weren't. We started doing some investigation on our own, talking to supervisors, state officials, compiling information, and we concluded a city in Live Oak could be successful."

They found revenues of over \$500,000 at that time, Mauro said, and saw that the proposed city could spend as much on Live Oak roads as the county is "with a higher level of service."

Mrs. White, who has done much of the research required for the incorporation effort, declared, "We know we're not getting services in proportion to the revenue generated in the area. Higher services can be generated for the same amount of money without taxation."

She pointed out that the LOCAL-G budget shows \$13,000 more for Live Oak streets and roads than the county says it is spending on them. (She placed heavy emphasis on the word "says.")

Ward was convinced that the Live Oak road department would be more efficient because less "unwieldy" than the county road department.

"Our men would not be sent all over the county," Mauro said. "We would have three men full time right here."

As for police protection, LOCAL-G has proposed a seven-man police department costing \$102,650 a year.

This has been criticized by Sheriff Doug James, who says the proposed budget would not provide the level of service now provided the area by his office and the highway patrol.

The LOCAL-G group does not agree with this at all.

"I asked a sheriff's deputy, and he said Live Oak is a quiet community," Mauro said. "There is one 24-hour-a-day patrol car here now."

But Mrs. White thought there might be more, adding "It is impossible to tell from their figures."

The LOCAL-G people emphasize that they have done their homework and have come up with a concrete budget establishing the feasibility of incorporating Live Oak.

Two months ago, the Local Agency Formation Commission, after a three-hour hearing, gave LOCAL-G the green light to try to get enough signatures on a petition for an incorporation election.

It will have to obtain signatures of owners of 25 per cent of the assessed land value of the area proposed for incorporation.

This roughly includes the area

from the east city Cruz at Seventh west city limits of Avenue, north of and south of Soqu

It is a compact half square mile estimated popula and an approxi valuation of \$23,8

Mrs. White point the presentation, question was raised proposed budget.

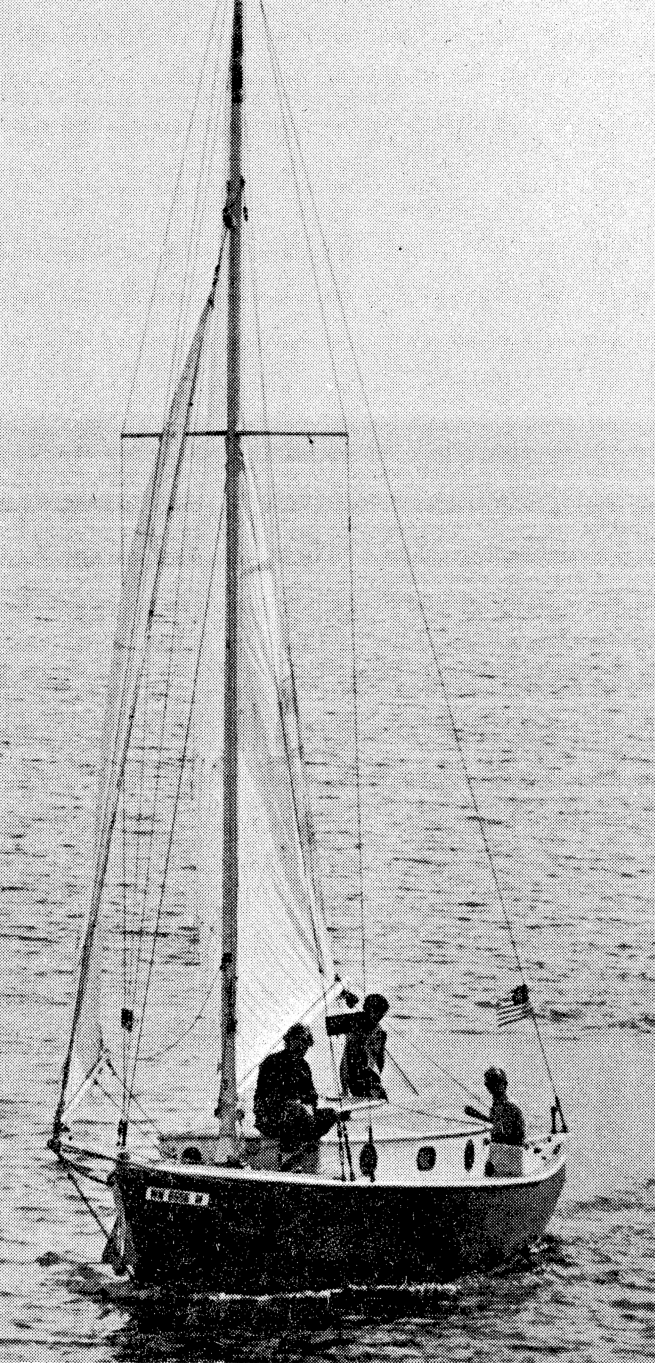
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Their next step w at least 25 and not signatures on a ' tention to circulate incorporate." This then be presented to Supervisors.

After that, LOC able to go ahead and incorporation petit have a year from complete the i proceedings and hol

One complicator law says a name mu at the time the n presented to Supervisor

Mauro neone



Off the waterfront

Who are these three men lolling in their boat off Capitola pier? Where have they been? What have they done? For the answers to these and other questions, turn to page 11.