

Group maps identity for Live Oak

By DENISE FRANKLIN
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LIVE OAK — This unincorporated area sandwiched between Capitola and Santa Cruz has beaches, businesses and 26,000 people. What it doesn't have is an identity, according to Paul Makris, Live Oak restaurateur.

So Makris and approximately 50 other business owners recently organized the Live Oak Business Association to overcome this identity crisis.

Their goals include making Live Oak known to those who ask, "Where's Live Oak?," establishing political clout, promoting the area, enticing new business, sponsoring an annual event, and beautification, said Makris, interim president.

"Live Oak is a no man's land as far as identity is concerned," said the owner of Polivios Restaurant in East Cliff Village.

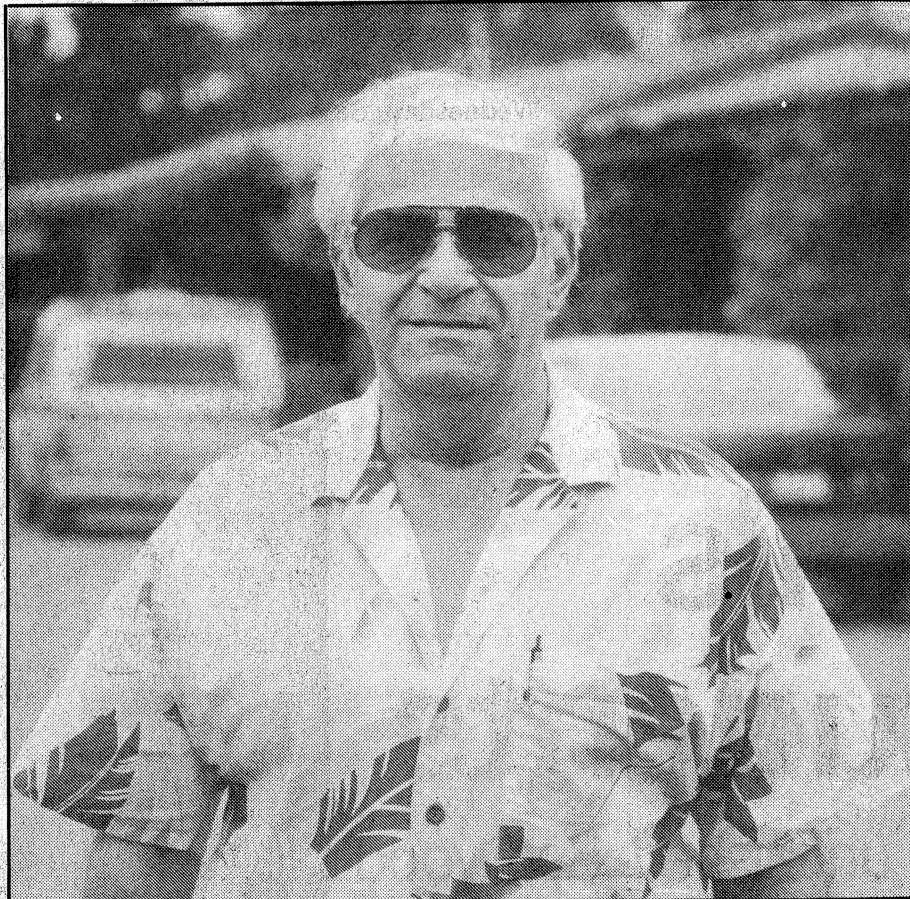
Some ideas for giving Live Oak an identity include promoting the area, putting up signs showing people where Live Oak is, and possibly a name change.

The name change could be for all of Live Oak, or just for sections, Makris said.

Some members of the association, for example, have suggested making "East Cliff Village" the name for the area around East Cliff Village Shopping Center.

"It would be like Capitola Village. It would have an identity. We would have at least one area with an identity and we could promote it for tourists. We want more tourists coming into the area. Now they go to Santa Cruz or Capitola, and when they do come through here, they think they are in Santa Cruz," he said.

To bring more people to Live Oak, the association would like to see the development of a large store, such as



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Paul Makris says Live Oak has an identity crisis.

Price Club, he added.

"As a business association, we might try to entice them. We need more clean industry of some type."

The association also plans to work closely with the county Redevelopment Agency toward beautification of Live Oak streets with trees, flowers and traffic islands.

The group's next meeting, at 7 p.m. Monday at Live Oak Senior Center, will take up this subject with members of the Redevelopment Agency who are preparing a "streetscape" design for Live Oak.

The group meets regularly at 7 p.m. on the second Monday of each month at various locations.

The association's promotional committee is looking into establishing a yearly festival or fair in Live Oak to establish an identity and to bring people to the area, Makris said.

"We are going to be political," he promised. "No organization is going to form like this and not be a political force of some type. As we address issues and become some kind of force, people will want to become part of it."

It actually was the Oct. 17, 1989, earthquake that got the Live Oak Business Association started. After the quake, the county received a \$60,000 grant from the state Department of Commerce to aid economic development.

Part of this money was used to set up the business association, according to Susan Pearlman of the county Human Resources Department. Pearlman acted as an advocate for small businesses under the grant program. Eight unincorporated areas, included Live Oak, shared the grant money.

In talking to Live Oak business owners, the idea for an association was raised, she related. A letter was sent in March to 225 businesses and 50 people attended the first meeting.

Although the grant program ended in June, Pearlman said that county staff will continue help the association. Presently, the group is writing its bylaws and applying for non-profit status.

Election of officers will take place in December. In the interim, Makris is president, attorney Valerie McGuire of Video City III is vice president, Phil Ruiz of Skinny McDoogie's Sports Bar is treasurer, Fran Reed of Cheshire Realty is secretary, and Sue Dumiller of Ferrari's Florist and Steve Irving of Pleasure Pizza are board members.

For more information about the association, Makris can be reached at 475-7600.