

Reception For Capitola Police Chief Is Sunday

By **BILL NEUBAUER**
Sentinel Staff Writer

Capitola residents will have the opportunity to meet new Police Chief Bob Allen at a reception from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday at City Hall.

Those who meet him are likely to find him as different as he's found his new job.

Arriving in town in April following a series of accusations of police harassment of city officials and residents, of illegal gun purchases and bitter in-fighting, Allen says he was girded to fight crime both inside and outside the department.

He says he read about the woes and viewed those who were to become his men as "old and set in their ways, generally incompetent and resistant to my appointment."

Instead, he says, "I found the officers willing to give me whatever space I needed, wanting the media to go away and let them go back to work." He says he also found no evidence of corruption or malfeasance.

"I've taken some time to go out into the field to observe and they do their jobs well. They're highly qualified and very attentive to the people," he said of his department.

As for "outside" crime, Al-

len says he had expected to encounter a lot of crime against both people and property because of the city's tourist-oriented, beachtown nature.

It quickly became apparent, he says, "that crime is not a problem here — maybe because the city is small and because the people who come here do so for other reasons than to rip."

"I'm not stroking the Police Department for that because the Police Department merely reacts to crime and I think it's the result of a community which is older than I'm used to: That maturity is nice," Allen says.

He, too, quickly established a "heavy" reputation upon his arrival for he quickly stepped into the SWAT or not-to-SWAT ballot battle and became a chief opponent of the initiative to ban the paramilitary teams.

Allen's a cop, yes, and the kind who climbed the hierarchy ladder from beat to brass. But, in conversation he comes across as soft-spoken and articulate; a man who can use reason better than a gun.

He says he became politically active on the ballot issue "not because I'm an advocate of having a SWAT team in Capitola, but because the initiative dug treacherously into a chief's responsibility."

"It went further than SWAT teams and automatic weapons, it would have forbade me to deal with a hostage situation in any way, including negotiation."

Allen, who commanded San Jose's SWAT teams when he served as deputy chief of field operations, admits that such teams have assault potential, "but the successful team is the one which doesn't have to use it."

The role of a SWAT team, Allen says, is to contain a situation, to keep it from worsening and moving until it can be dealt with in another fashion.

"The safety of a hostage relies on he or she staying there. The name of the game is containment and you buy time with containment."

Allen says he can't recall a San Jose SWAT team letting loose a burst of automatic fire.

"The weaponry in San Jose would really terrify CALM," Allen says, "but that doesn't mean they run around killing people."

In addition to field operations, Allen commanded the other two elements of the San Jose department — administration and investigation.

His promotion to deputy chief came in 1973 after he instituted an innovative field training program for rookie officers which won the department the top award from the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

That award, Allen says, was normally reserved for hardware programs, such as a munitions-sniffing machine developed by Israel in 1972.

Also following the award, Allen was selected by Harvard University to be a criminal justice fellow. There he conducted seminars and completed all of the coursework associated with a master's degree in public administration.

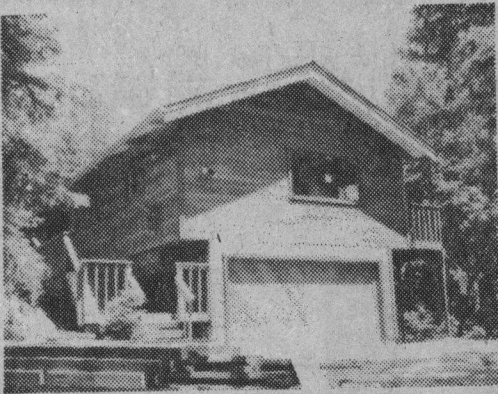
Midway through his 21-year career with the San Jose police, Allen was detected to have suffered hearing damage to his right ear, leaving him with monaural hearing.

"It had never been a worry, but in 1977 it began to worry the (new) chief," Allen says. Early this year at age 43, San Jose retired Allen on a disability.

To complete his shift from San Jose to Capitola, Allen is spending his off-time looking for a new home for his family which now lives on a small ranch in Morgan Hill.

Allen and his wife, Dona, have two daughters at home, Tari, 17, and Tami 16, and a married daughter, Tova Mott.

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