

Isobel Beebe Likes Being A 'Busybody'

BY RAHN ADAMS

It's hard to keep track of Isobel Beebe. Just ask her husband.

"Whenever my better half answers the phone for me when I'm not home, he always says, 'I don't know where she is,'" Mrs. Beebe explained. "He calls me 'the busybody' because I'm always on the go."

Although the 59-year-old Grissetown resident stays on the go in numerous other ways, she is best known here as secretary for Camp United Methodist Church in Shallotte, volunteering her secretarial services about nine hours a week.

"I've always said I wouldn't do it if I were paid for it," she said in an interview last week. "I enjoy being organized as much as I can and nagging everyone who isn't."

In other church-related work, she is a member of the choir, president of the church's United Methodist Women organization, subdistrict leader of the Brunswick County UMW group and secretary of the South Brunswick Inter-church Council.

On March 13, she was honored as one of 10 outstanding church members for 1987 in the Wilmington District of the United Methodist Church.

"Without Isobel, we simply could not accomplish all that we're able to do here at the church," said Rev. Stan Smith of Camp Methodist. "She really is indispensable."

But she is also a "busybody" outside of church.

She is secretary-treasurer of Hope Harbor, a shelter for victims of domestic violence in Brunswick County; a firefighter for the Grissetown-Longwood Volunteer Fire Department; a member of the Wilmington Choral Society; and public relations chairperson for the Beachcombers Unit of the Brunswick County Extension Homemakers Club.

Last year, she was recognized by the extension homemakers for having performed 840 hours of volunteer work in the community.

Community involvement is a way of life for Mrs. Beebe, a Hicksville, N.Y., native who moved to the Shallotte area from Long Island, N.Y., 4½ years ago with her husband of 18 years, Charles Beebe.

"I was born and raised in a small town, so it was a lot like Shallotte," she said. "You're used to knowing people, and that's one of the nice things about living here. It really makes you feel like a part of the community."

Before moving to Brunswick County, Mrs. Beebe retired after 37 years with Equitable Life Insurance Company of New York, where she worked as a secretary and paralegal. Her husband retired as a conductor with the Long Island Railroad.

Like many retirees, they chose the North Carolina coast for their new home because of the mild weather and natural beauty. Also, they are now located about halfway between Beebe's two children from a previous marriage who live in Florida and New York.

Mrs. Beebe gives her husband much of the credit for her involvement in community work.

"He's the one who's volunteered me for some of the things," she admitted, then added with a smile that she hasn't always had "sense enough to say no."

She became a volunteer firefighter after her husband, who was already a Grissetown-Longwood fireman, was unable to answer a fire call by himself one day when no other volunteers were available. To keep that from happening again, he decided his wife would learn to be a firefighter, too, and she agreed.

Now the Beebes also handle dispatching duties for their fire department, with radio equipment installed in their home.

When asked if she intends to volunteer or "be volunteered" in any other activities, she laughingly replied, "I can't think of anything else I'd like to take on."

She said her schedule is full—for the time being anyway.



ISOBEL BEEBE OF GRISSETTOWN is best known as secretary at Camp United Methodist Church in Shallotte, but the self-proclaimed "busybody" is active in numerous other types of local volunteer work.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

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