KINGS MOUNTAIN

The Herald

Thursday, May 6, 1999 | Vol. 111 No. 17 | Since 1889 | 50 Cents

*****CAR-RT SORT**C 002 10S
MAUNEY 11-11-00 310W 29P
307 MEMORIAL LIBRARY
100 S PIEDMONT AVE
KINGS MOUNTAIN NC 28086-3414

KMHS
Che
3B

Gunshot that injured bank employee Libby Blanton shattered glass door at First Charter Bank in Kings Mountain.

Bank employee shot in attempted robbery

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

A Kings Mountain bank employee was shot in an attempted bank robbery Wednesday morning.

According to FBI spokesperson Joanne Morley, Libby Blanton was apparently working alone in First Charter Bank at 7:59 a.m. when a Black male approached the bank and banged on the door on the northeast corner of the building.

Mrs. Blanton went to the door to inform him that the bank was not open, and he shot through the glass door, shattering the glass and striking Mrs. Blanton.

According to accounts pieced together from the FBI and Kings Mountain Police, the suspect ran into a wooded area behind the bank and Mrs. Blanton ran to East Gold Street and flagged down a motorist, who took her to Kings Mountain Police Department a block and a half away. She was then transported to Kings Mountain Hospital.

Although the hospital would not release any official details of her injuries, spokesperson Regina Gregg said she would be released before noon.

"She is doing great but is very scared," Gregg said. "She thanks everyone for their prayers. She was very, very lucky."

The Emergency Room area was full of concerned family members and friends. Mrs. Blanton's father, Tom Trott, said he wanted "to thank everyone who came to see about Libby," and thanked everyone for their prayers.

The suspect is described as a Black male, 6-feet tall and weighing around 200 pounds. He was wearing a black stocking mask, dark blue shirt and black jacket.

According to Mobley, he made threatening remarks to Mrs. Blanton prior to shooting through the glass door.

Mobley said the bank has double outside doors, a small walk-through area and another set of doors inside the building. From accounts she received, she said Mrs. Blanton was standing between the two sets of doors when she was shot. She said the bullet or bullets did not reach the inside glass doors.

Mobley said it was not yet certain what type of weapon was used, or how many shots were fired. She said the incident probably took a matter of seconds.

"She (Mrs. Blanton) said she thought it was some type of semi-automatic weapon," Mobley aid. "From what I know she was the only employee in the bank."

Canine units were called from the Shelby Police Department to search for the suspect.

The bank was closed for the day, according to Kevin Toomb, Marketing Director for First Charter, Concord. The bank was secured for law enforcement personnel who were still seeking clues at The Herald's press time.

"We're very thankful that she wasn't hurt badly," Toomb said. "She was conscious the whole time. This was an unfortunate incident."

SPORTS

Mountaineer golfers win Western Regional

Kings Mountain High's golf team won the Western Regional Championship Monday at Riverbend Golf Club in Shelby, and will compete in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Championship next Monday and Tuesday at Tradition Golf Club in Charlotte. 4A

Mounties eye playoffs in three spring sports

Kings Mountain High's girls softball team won the Southwestern 3A Conference championship, the soccer team is playing for the SWC championship tonight, and the baseball team finished third in the SWC, giving all three teams a berth in the upcoming state playoffs. 4A

COMMUNITY

Grover residents protest modular home

Residents of the Spring Acres subdivision in Grover protested to Grover Town Board Monday night about the placement of a modular home in their community. 8A

SCHOOLS

KMHS students win Dover scholarships

Kings Mountain High School seniors were among the winners of the Dover Foundation scholarships announced this week. 9A

LIFESTYLES

Volunteering enriching for KM Senior Director

Monty Thornburg, Director of the Kings Mountain Aging Program, is also a volunteer for Hospice of Cleveland County. 1B

Christine Morrison, left, has cared for her son, Butch, for 47 years

Morrison Herald's Mother of Year

BY ALAN HODGE
Staff Writer

The 1999 Kings Mountain Herald Mother of the Year is Christine Morrison. Presented with a dozen roses and a plaque naming her to that honor, she responded with what must be the understatement of the year- "I'm just a mom."

Living at 809 Oak Grove Road with her son Butch, Morrison is anything but "just a mom." Much of her daily routine is involved with caring for Butch as she has for 47 years. Born with spina bifida, Butch requires constant medical care and attention.

"As soon as he was born, I knew something wasn't right," Morrison said. "The doctors didn't give him a chance. I told them I had to take him home. Finally, a doctor from Hickory said it would be all right."

Morrison, whose husband passed away in 1975, looks at least a decade younger than her 75 years. Keeper of an immaculate house and yard, she was a textile designer during her working career with Neisler

See Mother, 3A

3 more students suspended

Two were preparing hit list, another had gun in book bag

By GARY STEWART
Editor of The Herald

Three more Kings Mountain students - all from the Middle School and all under the age of 16 - were suspended during the past week.

Two girls were suspended Friday after they were seen compiling a "hit list." According to Supt. Dr. Robert McRae, all the names on the list were of students.

A third Middle School student was suspended Monday after a knife was found in a book bag. McRae said school administrators were tipped off by other students. In addition to the suspension, the incident was reported to the Kings Mountain Police Department.

Meanwhile, the Kings Mountain High School freshman who was suspended for 10 days recently after allegedly telling a teacher that he and others were on his "hit list" has been suspended for the remainder of the year. McRae said the three students suspended at the Middle School could face a similar fate at the conclusion of their 10-day suspension.

McRae said the students who were seen compiling a list of names wrote "Hit List" at the top of their paper. "I don't believe they had any intention of carrying it out, but we're treating it very seriously," he said.

See Students

McDowell KM Teacher of Year

By GARY STEWART
Editor of the Herald

Since he was in the fourth grade at Compact School, Danny Ray McDowell has known he wanted to be a school teacher and make a difference in children's lives.

The 27-year veteran fourth grade teacher at Bethware Elementary School was honored for his dedication and years of service by being named Kings Mountain Teacher of the Year at Monday night's Service Awards Banquet at Kings Mountain High School. He will be entered into competition for State Teacher of the Year for the 1999-2000 school year.

While winning State Teacher of the Year would be a great accomplishment (McDowell is a two-time State Math Teacher of the Year), he says his greatest satisfaction is working with his students and parents and seeing the youngsters progress into the fifth grade.

"Being named Teacher of the Year is a great honor," he said, "but I give it right back to my kids and my parents. They are just the best in the world."

McDowell began his teaching career at Bethware 27 years ago, fresh out of Appalachian State University. He's always taught fourth grade. And, ironically, it was his fourth grade teacher that inspired him to teach.

"When I was down at Compact I had a fourth grade teacher named Mrs. Fowler," he recalled. "She showed me right then and there how a good teacher can make a difference. That started me.

"Then, when I got to Kings Mountain High School

See McDowell, 3A

Danny McDowell, left, accepts Teacher of the Year Award from last year's recipient, Leslie Martin

YOUR HOMETOWN BANK
FIRST NATIONAL BANK
Celebrating 125 Years
Kings Mountain
300 W. Mountain St.
739-4781
Gastonia
529 New Hope Rd.
865-1111
Shelby
Main Office
106 S. Lafayette St.
484-6200
Member FDIC