

Promoting KM is Shirley's calling

ELIZABETH STEWART

Herald Correspondent

The director of the Kings Mountain branch office of Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, Shirley Brutko, obviously loves her job.

Brutko answers the telephone with a smile in her voice and an excitement for revitalizing Kings Mountain that shows in her busy schedule.

"This was my calling," said Shirley, who joined the Chamber nearly nine years ago as a part time administrative assistant to Jay Rhodes when the office was located on the second floor of City Hall. Tim Waters succeeded Rhodes in the position and Brutko managed the office when it was relocated by the Cleveland Chamber on York Road.

The present location in the heart of downtown Kings Mountain is perfect for the Chamber, says Brutko. She has decorated the comfortable office that used to be the office of Travel Matters and planted flowers outside to create a park-like atmosphere. She is busy Mondays through Fridays from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and recently invited Lou Ballew, a member of the Chamber, to help her out as a Girl Friday answering the telephone and distributing maps and materials to visitors to the office.

The local Chamber is involved in the Main Street program and downtown revitalization spearheaded by Morgan Edwards and chairman Joni Smith and opening of that new office downtown. Brutko has focused attention on the Keep Kings Mountain Beautiful program headed by Sandra Murphrey and Mary Ann

Hendricks; Kings Mountain Gateway Trails Inc. headed by David Ozmore exploring the possibilities of connecting downtown to the city's lakes and historic battleground beyond and boosting the travel and tourism program, and other projects either ongoing or in the planning stages.

"We welcomed the new Magnolia Manor to the historic section of Kings Mountain and are excited about plans by John O. Harris Interests for a coffee shop/retail center next to the old Eagle's Dime Store which will enhance the shopping area downtown," said Brutko. She said Johnny Harris plans to revitalize both the back and front of that building.

Brutko accepted the invitation of Kings Mountain Rotary Club to pick out the playground equipment the club plans to install this fall at Patriot Park, looking at slides and swings, a picnic area and possibly a walkway area for parents and their children to enjoy.

This week she has received applications from people interested in jobs which could encourage a boat manufacturer to locate in Cleveland County. She said 1,350 applications had been received from Cleveland County citizens in a project initiated by the Cleveland Chamber called Operation Float.

Since January Shirley has welcomed 14 new Chamber members. Shirley says she appreciates the active board of directors Bill Plowden, Mark Carter, Gregg Johnson, Scott Neisler and Steve Padgett and the advisory council which includes Dr. David Johnson, Larry Hamrick Jr., Robert Bolin, Rosemary Suess, Ronnie Hawkins, Troy Jones, Dr. Jay Majors, Sherry



SHIRLEY BRUTKO

DeShazo, and ex officio members Kristi Anthony, Houston Corn, Morgan Edwards, Stuart Gilbert, Terry Brown, Adrian Hamrick and Stephanie Trogdon

"My roots are in Kings Mountain," said Brutko who is a native of Raeford but moved here 35 years ago when her husband was transferred by Spectrum Textured Fibers and the whole family quickly became active in the Kings Mountain community.

A talented artist, Shirley Knapp started drawing at age 5 and credits her love of art to her father, also an artist, and her mother, who encouraged her to enter a newspaper coloring contest which she won and received a Madame Alexander doll, Ginny. Shirley inherited her creativity from her great-grandfather, an inventor.

Not only is her artwork displayed in the Chamber office but is seen on note cards available at the Chamber, Patrick Center, Cleveland Arts Council and Kings Mountain Historical Museum. She

also designs the annual July t-shirt for Lake Montonia Club on the theme, "Love this Life." She usually keeps the originals of her note card art work which include a variety of subjects, the Mauney House, founded in 1874, one of the oldest structures in Kings Mountain in the historic district; and the Battle monument, to name a few.

She was instrumental in the relocation of the Barber Cabin on the site of the KM Historical Museum property and said that presently the house is being chinked, cementing between the logs. The old Cornwell house at the site is also to be renovated, she said.

Shirley's favorite watercolor, the Kings Mountain day lily, is on a bookmark available to the public. Brutko has her own Kings Mountain day lily garden and enjoys photographing and painting the flowers in her yard. She said the inspiration for the book mark came from former mayor Scott Neisler who visited Iron Gate Gardens in Cherryville in 1977 and found that the owner, Van Sellers, had propagated the Kings Mountain day lily, a very large flower with ruffles on the edges. The beautiful plants were purchased by Neisler and are being grown in Kings Mountain. Garden clubs and individuals are presently cultivating and multiplying the plants and they bloom in the early summer at garden spots at the local post office.

Shirley's interest in the Southern Arts Society has led to several of her paintings exhibited there. Recently she won the People's Choice Award, a portrait she painted of daughter, Kerri, in the "I Am

Woman" show at the Depot Art Center. Currently Shirley enjoys painting and studying with artists at Cleveland Community College and plans to paint Don Dixon's 100-year-old red barn for note cards which will include the history of the Dixon barn.

Shirley Knapp Gossett and Mal Brutko were married 24 years ago. Their family includes three children, Lt. Col. Todd Gossett, a USAF career officer who moves to The Pentagon in July, and his wife, Lisa; Ashley Harris and husband, Johnny; and Kerri Brutko, a graduate of Appalachian State University who teaches health education for the Cleveland County Health Department. The six grandchildren include Kayla, Dora and Ada Gossett and John, Layla and Abby Harris.

Shirley teaches an adult Sunday School class at First Presbyterian Church.

Shirley and Mal are planning a special trip in celebration of their silver wedding anniversary next year. The Brutko family, with huge roots in Wales, is planning a 10-day trip to Ireland, Switzerland and Wales, and have already had their first dinner meeting with several other couples who plan to join them on the anniversary excursion. They are Ronnie and Libby Hawkins, Hallie and Nelson Conner, Ron and Jane Morgan of Charlotte and Carl Elliott and a friend from Rock Hill, SC

"It's going to take us a year to plan this trip and we're having such fun getting together at each other's homes, planning the itinerary and we even plan a mini weekend in Virginia as a trial run to see how we'd enjoy being together for a longer period of time," she said.

Training helps police prepare for desperate situations

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An officer receives a call about two suspicious males in an abandoned warehouse. Upon arrival, the officer finds two men standing near a female on the floor. She looks up and softly cries, "Help me." About that time, one of the men pulls out a large kitchen knife and holds it up near his head. The officer informs the man to drop his weapon and put his hands in the air. After some hesitation, he puts the knife on the ground and his hands to the sky. But while one is surrendering, the other, not so eager to be imprisoned, reaches for his gun. Fight or flight syndrome kicks in, but running is not an option for law enforcement. They have to stay and fight. They have to protect the people they serve at all costs, even if the cost is their life. The above scenario is one of many new training simulations now being used by the Kings Mountain Police Department (KMPD) to prepare their officers for these desperate situations.

In these life and death, heart-pounding, blood-racing situations, decisions have to be made within a fraction of a second. An officer's reaction is key to his survival. Proper training improves reactions and keeps the officer on his toes. KMPD and Shelby Police Department (SPD) now have access to some of the most technologically-advanced training for law enforcement today. The new system L600 uses interactive simulated scenarios, along with laser sensors, cameras, computers, nylon balls and laser beams to provide officers with real-life experience in the safety of a classroom.

Cleveland County Community College contributed half of the purchase price on the L600 from Advanced Interactive Systems (AIS). They will maintain the system. SPD and KMPD put in the rest of the money dependent on the number of officers they had in each of their departments. Their dedicated room for training is Classroom 2 at the training center in Shelby. The departments can schedule the months or time periods they would like to do their

exercises in the room and have complete private access. But the new technology is also portable.

"We have these systems in over 59 countries worldwide. We sell to both police departments, federal and local agencies, as well as military," said AIS Field Manager John Wills. "Our latest product, called the L600, is what they have purchased here and it's a portable system that comes in four cases. They can put it in the back of an SUV and set up anywhere they want." It takes about 15 minutes to set up.

Through this new technology, officers can practice their marksmanship, improve their response or reaction times and polish other skills that can be essential out in the field. In a live firing range, the shooters and paper targets are standing still. This practice helps improve marksmanship but is not always practical for in the heat of the moment situa-

tions. "In the real world, the bad guys are moving and a lot of times we're moving too. So that's what we want to see in here. Can they apply the same skills that they learned on that range, right in here and then apply that to the real world," Wills said.

Many different situations have been filmed with many different possible outcomes for the officers to practice with. The scenario is projected onto the screen from the computer. The officer stands facing the screen and must react and give commands to the people on the screen just like he would do in real life. If deadly force is necessary, the officer may use his gun, taser, O.C. spray (mace), or shot gun. These weapons are the exact same ones used out in the field but are empty and rigged with a laser device. When they are fired at the screens, the laser beam is read by the laser sensors on the camera below the screen,

which records the exact location of the hits on the target or person.

"If they use the taser correctly on the scenario here, the same thing that happens to a person on the street where it freezes that person and it causes the central nervous system to react - the same thing happens in here. If they get shot on the screen, the bad guy goes down. If they get sprayed with the O.C. the same reaction occurs just like on the street. Most people are going to cover their eyes and they're going

to stop whatever they're doing. The same reactions that occur in the real world are filmed on the scenarios to occur just like they would on the street," Wills said.

The operator programs what happens and the outcomes of each situation based on what the officers say and do. If they say and do the right things then the operator will branch the scenario to end with the suspect cooperating. "The instructor has the ability to override the system, so to speak, and it's

See Training, 8A

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