

KM PD adds new K9 member to the force

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Max, one of the Kings Mountain Police Department's newest recruits, isn't much of a talker.

What he lacks in verbal skills, he makes up for in speed, a great nose and fearless obedience to serving the small police force since arriving here in February from a specialized Dutch kennel by way of an elite Scotland Neck, N.C., police dog training school.

"He's going to be great for this department. He's highly trained and has the right personality," said Ptl. Chris Graham, the KMPD's K9 officer and Max's handler, as he talked at his desk on a recent afternoon.

Max, through his training and breeding, is a Swiss Army knife among dogs. The German Shepherd mix can sniff out evidence or illegal drugs and aid in the hunt for criminals or missing people. When push comes to shove, of course, he can subdue a fleeing or fighting suspect when police officers have exhausted other methods.

Graham, an officer with seven years' experience working with police dogs, says he and Max, who is just shy of two years old, will come

to share a tight bond as they work together more and more. The department's last service dog, Kasey, who was on the job for seven years, left the force in February and now lives with Graham. Photographs of the furry retiree dot the walls in Graham's office.

"Basically, I couldn't do my job without him and he couldn't do his without me," Graham said. "It's a team."

Belonging to that team requires lots of training. Before they're picked up by a law enforcement agency, Max and dogs like him spend about three months in specialized training schools learning the ins and outs of police work. They execute scent drills – for tracking people and locating contraband. They're immersed in a world of handler commands so they can be quickly and effectively put on, and off, tasks. Dogs like Max also must learn to apprehend suspects who may be combative or resisting arrest.

Police dogs are also specialists in finding innocent people who have gone lost or missing. They're trained to pick up on the faintest of smells – from a necklace, a phone or an article of clothing, "anything

that will hold a human odor," Graham said, – and relentlessly track that scent. "It's not always a bad guy," he said.

To understand just how much better dogs are at picking up on differing scents than humans are, we have to look at the numbers.

Humans possess about five million scent receptors – tiny, microscopic clusters of nerves and cells. Some dog breeds have about 225 million, according to the American Kennel Club. Furthermore, certain breeds can sense odors at concentrations nearly 100 million times lower than humans can.

Training, for Graham or Max, will never end.

"It's 16 hours a month of ongoing training," which he said in Max's case is mostly done in conjunction with Gaston County Sheriff's Department's police and K9 training program. "Training keeps 'em sharp."

Kasey logged over 500 arrest assists and helped find illegal drugs 345 times during his career, according to Police Chief Melvin Proctor.

Max is still a rookie by almost any definition. But Graham is certain he's got a long and busy career ahead of him.



Ptl. Chris Graham is the handler of the KMPD's newest recruit, Max. The shepherd mix joined the force in February as a K9 officer.
photot by DAVE BLANTON

Main Street Program accredited

Kings Mountain's Main Street Program has been designated as an accredited National Main Street Program for 2013 for meeting the performance criteria set by the national program, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The city's Main Street initiative aims to drive business and promote growth through revitalization and building strong public-private partnerships.

Kings Mountain was named a North Carolina Main Street City in 2009. Last year the program was incorporated into the municipal structure of the City of Kings Mountain as a stand-alone department, said Jan Harris, the city's Main Street Director, who heads the initiative.

The accreditation "shows dedication to the city," she said.

Local Main Street programs are evaluated annually by state officials in the N.C. Dept. of Commerce, who work in partnership with the National Main Street Center to identify programs that meet ten performance standards, including having broad-based support for the commercial district revital-



Mayor Rick Murphrey congratulates Main Street Director Jan Harris who received a certificate designating the city as an accredited National Main Street Program.

ization process, exhibiting an historic preservation ethic, reporting statistics and having a paid professional program manager.

Established by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980, the Main Street Center has aided more than 2,200 downtown and urban neighborhoods by

helping leverage \$55.7 billion in new public and private investment, according to Harris.

Participating communities have created more than 470,000 new jobs and nearly 110,000 new businesses, as well as rehabilitating more than 230,000 buildings, she said.

Mayor Rick Murphrey said he was pleased with the news. "It shows we're doing the right thing and meeting all criteria," he said.

North Carolina is home to 61 Main Street cities, with 27 earning accreditation in 2013, including nearby Shelby, Lincolnton, Hickory and Monroe.

Wells elected District 10 Democratic Chair

Betsy Wells of Kings Mountain was elected the new District Chair of District 10 Democrats as a call to action toward victory in 2014 general elections brought an enthusiastic response from delegates to the 10th Congressional District Democratic Convention in Shelby recently.

That rousing message was brought by Randy Voller, chair of the North Carolina Democratic Party and keynote speaker at the 10th's first annual convention since redistricting.

The district now comprises all of Polk, Rutherford, Cleveland, Gaston, and Lincoln counties, most of Catawba County, and the Asheville area of Buncombe. Each county was well represented by delegations elected at county conventions held in April. After morning workshops including a session on proposed changes to N. C. voting laws, delegates in convention session also elected district officers and approved resolutions to be sent forward to the state party. The convention was held in the auditorium of the Cleveland County Office Building.

Other district leaders elected to new two-year terms are Aixa I. Wilson of Buncombe County, first vice chair; Christopher L.



10th District Democratic Chair Betsy Wells

Thomason of Gaston, second vice chair; Pete L. Santos of Polk, third vice chair; Laura N. Parnell of Catawba, secretary; and Donna Luckey of Lincoln, treasurer.

They'll guide the District's Executive Committee, which also comprises the Democratic chair and vice chair from each of the local county parties and some others by virtue of position such as Democratic elected officials.

Wells commended the county parties for smoothly coming together after redistricting "without missing a beat," building on earlier working relationships and forging new ones. "With the unity, focus, and optimism I see building among us, we'll make a big difference in 2014," she said.

CORRECTION

The racer reported by the Herald as the winner of the May 18 Over the Mountain Triathlon was assessed a two-minute penalty for a drafting foul in the cycling segment, making his official finish 3rd. The official winner of the race was James Haycraft, 28, of Charlotte, with a time of 2:09:21. The Herald regrets the error.



NEW OFFICERS OF DEMOCRATIC WOMEN – Pictured are new officers of Democratic Women of Cleveland County. From left, Julie Stockton, who succeeds Betsy Wells of Grover precinct in the post; Brenda Lipscomb of Grover, right, vice president; Ernestine Bishop of Oak Grove precinct, second from right, secretary; and Laura Cummings of Woodbridge community, not pictured. Cleveland County Clerk of Court Mitzi M. Johnson, second from left, led the new officers in taking their oaths of office May 20. The organization will host the annual state convention of North Carolina Democratic Women Sept. 20-22 at the LeGrand Center in Shelby, first timer for the convention in Cleveland County.

MOMS TO MEET – Moms Club of Shelby, a chapter of an international club for stay at home moms and moms who work part time and their children, will meet June 6 at 11:30 a.m. Mothers and their children 0-4 are invited to meet and greet at Jammin J's Pizza in Shelby. The club also meets at the same place on June 18 at 4 p.m. for mothers and children 4 and over.

Bloodmobile to visit Cleveland County in June

The Red Cross Bloodmobile will be in two locations in the county in June.

Hospice of Cleveland County, 951 Wendover Heights, Shelby, will host the bloodmobile on June 12. Donors will be processed from 1-5 p.m.

Kings Mountain Elite will host the June 17 bloodmobile at the Family Life Center of Bynum Chapel AME Zion Church. Donors will be processed from 4:30-7:30 p.m.

"We invite everyone to come out for these blood drives," says Vickie Adams.

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