

Union County E911 - 2023

Union County E911 Communications Center (UCE911) is a vital component of public safety and emergency operations in Union County. Our E911 Center is what is known as a PSAP, or "public safety answering point."

Fire Dept. from Union County Fire Chief David Dyer



The Union County E911 Center answered 12,944 emergency 911 calls in 2023. That is an average of approximately 36 emergency 911 calls per day.

Not only do the dispatchers answer 911 calls but they also take and make numerous other phone calls in the performance of their duties. We classify these calls as administrative calls.

Phone calls are just one part of the job at the UCE911 Center. The dispatchers must also talk on the radio. It is estimated that for each phone call taken by the UCE911 Center, there are at least 8 radio transmissions.

The last major duty of the UCE911 Center is to record information. The information is recorded in the Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD). Each call for service is recorded in the CAD.

See Dyer, page 5A

Pursue Love

It was a cold and foggy night last December. I was on the train to London. At one stop a young woman boarded and sat just across from me.

Her adored presence announced that love was in the air. It made the trip a bit more pleasant, which brings me to this thought. Love makes your trip through life more pleasant, doesn't it?

All Things New Wayne Fowler



It's an easy challenge if you can define love any way you please. But you can't. As country singer Johnny Lee croons, "I was lookin' for love in all the wrong places."

It's true that we need an absolute standard for love. "Anything goes" is a confusing, harmful idea. The right standard is what the Bible says: "God is love."

God's standard for love includes embracing truth and taking action. To ignore, endure, or propagate a lie is not loving. Francis Schaeffer wrote, "The Christian has to practice both God's holiness and God's love...Not love without holiness - that is only compromise."

See Fowler, page 5A

Commissioner's Questions

This week, I will be providing some basic data/facts about Union County. Some of these may be linked, but some will seem random.

Some Union County, Georgia General Facts as of January, 2024

Q & A from Union County Commissioner Lamar Paris



- There are: 11 Voting Precincts
• There are: 6 Emergency Response Precincts
• There are: 116 Documented Cemeteries
• There are: 84 Churches
• There are: 1035 Fire Hydrants
• There are: 13 Fire Stations
• There are: 10 Helicopter Landing Zones
• There are: 44 Officially Permitted Billboards
• There are: 13 Cell Towers
• There are: 20,087 Addresses
• There are: 5 School Districts
• There are: 90 Locations Reported To Have Aeds (Automated External Defibrillators)
• There are: 52 Knox Box locations
• There are: 10 RV Parks
• There are: 551 Properties Holding Active Short-Term Rental Business Licenses

Connection

Part of loneliness is being unconnected, feeling aloneness. People have a psychological need for physical attachments. The connection may come from parents, close friends, family members, and romantic partners.

Successful Mental Health Dr. James Ray Ashurst Ph.D.



Loneliness is proof that your innate search for connection is intact.

-Martha Beck

See Ashurst, page 5A

Letters to the Editor

Potholes Repaired

The potholes that were particularly egregious at the intersection of the Murphy Highway and 515 have been filled. Thank you to our county or DOT for the quick response.

Larry Madison

Workforce Housing

"Workforce Housing." Hmm... Sounds good; but what is a small-town (I use the term lovingly referring to Blairsville) American government agency(?) doing funding a housing development?

People who are working like hospital workers, school teachers, make salaries and buy homes like the rest of us! They obtain mortgages, and there are plenty of homes out there for these people.

What this is, is simply subsidized housing for people who basically do not work. The LORD calls on his people to care for the needy, and we respond here in Blairsville with food

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Funding Ukraine

Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, recently spoke on the Senate floor about our failure to agree on further aid for Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. Sen. King said, "Whenever people write to my office asking why we are supporting Ukraine, I answer, Google Sudetenland, 1938. We could have stopped a murderous dictator who was bent on geographic expansion ... at a relatively low cost.

Sen. King is speaking of the German annexation of the area in Czechoslovakia known as The Sudetenland and the appeasement of Hitler by Great Britain and France in advance of World War II.

In current times, the threat is Putin and Russia invading Ukraine while our Congress is wasting time arguing about funding Ukraine in this fight. Many believe Putin will not stop with Ukraine but will push to expand further just as

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Letters to the Editor

Making A Difference

Late in the cold evening of Sunday, February 4th, I was scrambling to offer comfort and humane assistance to a lost blind miniature terrier dog that suddenly showed up on my front porch.

Early the next morning, I contacted Animal Control, where Deputy Vickie Stewart was quick to help me with her kind words; minutes later Deputy Stewart was knocking at my front door and promptly assessing the situation.

Public officials like Deputy Vickie Stewart must be recognized and praised for their incredible everyday work, many times overlooked, supporting our community and our values.

AnaLuisa Salvatti

Political Baseline

Back when I was a youngster and dirt was new, neighbors could vote this way or that and still swap hunting stories over hamburgers on Saturdays.

My Grandpap, a lifelong union railroad foreman and former boxer, could vote Democrat while sporting an anti-abortion sticker on his Plymouth. That was when folks in both parties could celebrate life, family and Country without being hypocrites.

Currently, even the most "moderate" of democrats in the U.S. Legislature are 100% pro-abortion, and I don't mean any of that '70s "first trimester" hockum; I mean "till birth" and even after (!) Even France isn't that over-the-top.

Five of my nieces and nephews were born at least four weeks early, and politicians in DC are supporting death for these "clumps of cells" way past some of my family's actual birth dates.

What's their problem? Well, if you notice the cities that regularly go amuck over this, that or the other, they have one thing in common - they are poor and they are Democrat run, perennially.

See Tarter, page 5A

Servicing

Words can have a profound affect upon our everyday lives. If you say a word with few specifics attached I may not fully understand what you are trying to communicate.

Around The Farm

Mickey Cummings



As two young boys, my Dad and his brother Bud experienced a word that confused them, or so they said. The word at the source of the confusion was "service." The two young boys had heard the word many times.

Immediately after World War II, Papa was able to purchase a new truck to be used on their farm. A tractor was also purchased in quick succession. A few months after the purchase Papa took the vehicles back to the dealer to have them "serviced."

Another way they had heard the word used was associated with the local Church. They had been to church "services." They had watched old Mattie sit on the right side of the church using a deep baritone voice to laugh out loud and holler "Amen" when the preacher said something that blessed his soul.

It was at a service such as this one where their friend, Tucker, slipped outside during the preaching and placed nails in front of old man Newell's logging truck in hopes of him getting a flat tire.

See Cummings, page 5A

Chamber of Commerce

I would like to thank all those that attended An Evening with the STARS last week. It was very inspirational to hear each student speak of their educational experiences and their plans for the future.

I have had an opportunity to spend time around our College and Career Academy, and the work they are doing is cutting edge. They are aligning the pathways to meet the needs of our local businesses, but they are also creating pathways that will give students the best opportunities to find jobs and find careers once they graduate.

Blairsville - Union County Chamber President Steve Rowe



See Chamber, page 5A

Raised Bed Soils

Last week I talked about the different materials that can be used to construct a raised bed. This week I want to talk about what we put in the raised beds. There are many different options out there, some are better than others are, and some are cheaper than others are.

Watching and Working

Jacob Williams



Before filling up your raised garden bed figure out how many cubic feet of soil you will need. This is a simple calculation of multiplying length by width by height. Let's use the dimensions 8 feet X 4 feet X 10 inches.

Now that we have the math out of the way and know how much material we need let's talk about what materials can be used. Obviously, you can use top soil to fill the raised bed. If you have extra top soil nearby this might make sense for you. Otherwise, I don't think that it's a great option.

Another option would be to go to the store and buy bags of soil that are made for raised beds. This would give you quality soil in the beds. The flip side is that you're going to spend a lot of money doing it. You could easily spend \$\$\$ for soil using the dimensions I talked about earlier.

Compost is a great way to fill your raised beds. However, beds shouldn't be 100% compost, they need some soil in their too. Compost that has completely composted will provide many nutrients to the soil.

The lasagna method is a popular way to fill raised beds. You alternate layers of brown and

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Remembering Melva Lynn Drake

"... early superstar on UCHS girls' basketball team."

By Jack V. Colwell

I was saddened to learn of the recent death of Melva Lynn McAfee Drake, 86, and I found her obituary online. She was one of my classmates in the Union County High School graduation class of 1954, and I had kept in contact with her some through the years by mail and phone. Comments with the obituary described her as a sweet and kind person, which she definitely was.

I have not lived in Blairsville since high school. I have only a few distant relatives there, and I know very few present Union County people. I have not subscribed to the North Georgia News in recent years. I do not know whether anything has been published about Melva Lynn's basketball stardom. She was an early superstar on the UCHS girls' basketball team.

I was privileged to be a basketball starter my senior year when Jack Lance Sr., then a junior, was the first superstar on the boys' basketball team. When Jack died a few years ago, a lot was published about his basketball record as well as his other outstanding accomplishments. I do not know whether Melva Lynn has been remembered anywhere as the great player she was but am writing this to recall a few facts about her record.

The game of high school basketball has changed a lot since 1954, especially girls' basketball. Then, the girls played half court with three guards and three forwards, none of whom could cross the center line because full court play was considered too strenuous for them. The boys' team got a lot of attention, and girls' basketball was subjugated.

1954 must have been one of the best, if not the best, overall season for combined winning percentage of boys and girls for UCHS basketball. The girls' regular season record was 18-2 and they lost a close game to Clayton in the tournament. Their overall winning percentage was 86. The boys had a 19-1 record against high school teams and won the home games among the four played against the Young Harris College Junior Varsity, and the North Georgia College Freshmen. They lost by 1 point to Clayton in the tournament and finished with a 24-4 won-lost record for a percentage of 84.

Cummings... continued from Page 4A

them about the nails, and the two boys didn't utter a word. They would not give up their friend Tucker. As a result, the two boys received a severe whipping.

Other ways in which the word, "service" was used included funerals. When my Papa was about 7, a young girl in the community named Imogene died from Scarlet Fever. She was the only child in her family and was adored by her Daddy. So, naturally there was much grief in the family. My great-grandfather Lon was a master of many trades, including sawyer, miller and blacksmith. He was very good at woodworking, and it was his tradition to make caskets for people in the community. I've been told that he made more than 300 coffins for his neighbors during his lifetime. I digress, so let me get back to the story. After the girl's death, my great-grandparents traveled to Haleyville, Alabama, on a cold and icy day to purchase the lining for the coffin of this little girl while Lon built the coffin of hand-planed white-oak boards.

Papa went with his Dad to the Stein home and retrieved the little girl. They placed her inside the coffin, then loaded the coffin in the back of the wagon and hauled her 1.5 miles to Union Hill Church. After the service, he watched as the coffin was placed in the ground and covered with soil. Needless to say the young boy was not fond of

Connell...

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Hitler did in his day.

Sen. King said "People say Putin will stop with Ukraine, but the Finns don't think so. The Swedes don't think so. The Baltic countries don't think so, and the Finns and the Swedes know Russia."

Mr. King is right. The U.S. must provide funding for Ukraine in its efforts to stop this modern-day dictator and his invasion of a democratic neighbor.

Penny Connell



Melva Lynn Drake
(1937-2024)

I have records that Jack and Melva Lynn had almost identical averages in points scored. Both averaged 22 points per game. Her average, in fact, was a fraction of a point higher than his. In her last game, a 48-44 loss to Clayton in the tournament, she scored 40 of her team's 44 points. Their averages could have been higher, but Coach Butterworth did not believe in running up the score against weak teams. He often took the starters out as early as in the second quarter and let the bench players finish the game.

I was very interested in statistics after my senior season, and very complete records had been kept for the boys' team. Girls' basketball got far less attention than it deserved. All kinds of statistics, including such as rebounds and interceptions, were kept for the boys, but only points scored for the girls.

I prepared a loose leaf notebook of about 75 pages about the early years of basketball at UCHS and gave a copy to the museum in the old Blairsville courthouse. It indicates that the gymnasium was completed in the spring of 1950, and by 1954, we had two of the best teams in North Georgia. Every score beginning with four games, all losses, against B teams that were played during school hours in the spring of 1950 was preserved. From 1951 through 1954, every schedule with regular season and tournament scores and box scores is included in the notebook. On the cover of the notebook are pictures of four people who helped UCHS rise from the bottom to the top in high school basketball in less than five years. They are Principal C.R. Collins, Coach J.B. Butterworth, Jack Lance, and Melva Lynn McAfee. Early stardom in UCHS basketball is something well worth remembering about Melva Lynn.

Williams... continued from Page 4A

green material. Brown material is dry leaves, shredded newspaper, peat, and pine needles. Green materials are vegetable scraps, garden trimmings, and grass clippings. The green materials contain nitrogen and the brown materials contain carbon. Make the brown layers twice as thick as the green layers and it will compost down into a good material into which you can plant.

If you have beds that are

very deep another option is the put branches in the bottom to fill up space. The branches will break down over time, giving you good material in which to grow. My preference is to use a third native soil, third bagged soil, and a third compost to fill up the raised bed.

If you have questions about filling your raised bed contact your County Extension Office or email me at Jacob.Williams@uga.edu.

Tarter... continued from Page 4A

ocrat (or any) Speakers of the House, famously said that "all politics is local."

Meaning that you need to keep tabs on who's running below the radar in your local elections. Because THEY have more effect on our lives than do the Congressdoobies in the U.S. Capitol North of Richmond.

Which brings me to my point (sigh of relief).

Local candidates for office often have an irritating and potentially misleading habit of not identifying the political

party that they are affiliated with. In 1965, that wasn't as suspect as is it nowadays with COMPLETELY different ideas on ethics, criminality and constitutional rights between the two parties.

After the Herr Fauci and CDC/FDA nonsense of the past three years, do YOU think party affiliation isn't a long-term indicator of what could happen here again, and possibly worse right here in River City?

There is zero, zed, nada chance of me voting for soda pop commissioner if they aren't up-front with me about their party affiliation and WHY.

That's the baseline for determining their other qualities.

J. Murray Tarter

Dyer...

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just a glimpse of the many vital actions and duties performed by the UCE911 Center and the dedicated dispatchers who work there.

Union County Fire Department ~Our Family Protecting Your Family~ and included in that family are the E911 dispatchers.

Ashurst...

continued from Page 4A

All of us desire intimate friendships. But how do we connect with them? It just does not take place automatically. Such a relationship happens over time because it requires effort and work. One has to prove to the other that the element of care and support is certainly involved and needed. Each person, through positive action, must demonstrate a caring outreach. It can't be just in words. It must also include action! Without actions, the word "intimate" will be absent from the wonderful formula of a relationship.

*The loneliness you feel
is actually an
opportunity to reconnect with
others and yourself.
-Lagrace*

Chamber...

continued from Page 4A

The future is bright for our students, and we should give a big Thank You to our Union County School System for facilitating "Success for All."

Education will help keep life better in Blairsville!

Fowler...

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selfless. It bears burdens, forgives wrongs, and is not easily offended (1 Cor. 13). To pursue these is to adorn yourself with the Father's love.

"Someone must love you," I said to the young woman on the train. She smiled. "Actually, these are for my dad. He has been abroad for a long time, so I decided to dress up to meet him at the airport!" She adorned herself to express love. But her father loved her first.

Wells...

continued from Page 4A

pantries, church donations, and a loving community that works together. It is not the job of government! These subsidies are everywhere in Atlanta; we do not need a repeat of that here. It brings crime, drugs, gangs and all the things we do not want in our hometown. Now, where do the people of Blairsville get a vote on this?

Valerie Wells

Bell Ringing Union County Old Courthouse



February 13, 2024

In memory of

John & Virginia B. Meeks
on their wedding anniversary
by Ginger and Terry Meeks

February 18, 2024

In honor of

Ruby Jones
on her 90th birthday
by Pat and Larry Clay

**Bell ringing information
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