

North Georgia News

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Chief Carroll: 'the number of needy kids has exploded'

By Charles Duncan
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It's that time of year again and Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll says his department is primed for the challenge.

No, the chief and his officers aren't gearing up to fight a crime spree, they're looking forward to Dec. 8th and taking 40 local youth on a shopping adventure.

The officers who proudly wear the uniform of the Blairsville Police Department say this event is as much an event for them as it is for the children.

"We look forward to this as much as the children do," said Officer Rusty Walker.

Shop With a Cop has lit up the faces of more than 500 local youth since the program began in 1999. Chief Carroll

and Assistant Chief Michael Baxter assist the local community has this year's event covered.

"It's been going on for several years," Baxter said. "We take the kids shopping, we take them for a meal. Each child is allotted a certain amount of money and they shop the way they want to."

Union County Family Connection, teachers and other sources point the department in the direction of prospective shoppers.

Many, Baxter said, don't shop for themselves.

"These are the kids that fall through the cracks," Baxter said. "It's the kids that are sort of in limbo when it comes to Christmas. Everyone likes to see the eyes of the little ones light up. Well, the tweens (11-17) sort of get left out."

"Yes, they're excited about Shop With a Cop. They've got their lists made



Blairsville Police Chief Johnny Carroll says his department is ready for Shop With a Cop. However, he says there's more than 40 needy children on the list. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

out," he said. "You'd be surprised how many are buying Christmas for their other family members, not for themselves. It really warms your heart to see these kids buying Christmas for their families." The officers, many who

volunteer their time to help with the event, make a difference in the lives of at least 40 local youth. They will take the youth to Walmart to shop, they'll take them out to eat and then they'll take them home.

The program also makes a difference in the lives of several Blairsville families as the officers deliver food for a Christmas meal to those in need.

"It's a big deal to us, once a year, every year, we get to make a difference," Baxter said. "It's something that we look forward to. The community has blessed us with this opportunity. We know times are hard, the economy is still down, but the local businesses and residents have backed us up. We appreciate that, you just don't know how much we appreciate that."

The most memorable moment for Walker came

when a young man he was helping shop, put three large packs of socks in his shopping cart.

"I asked him if he was going to go through that many pairs of socks," Walker said. "He told me the reason he bought three large packs of socks was that he had never had a new pair of socks before."

"Shopping with these kids will really open your eyes," Walker said.

Shop With a Cop isn't the only program that makes children smile at Christmas.

The Union County Sheriff's Office's Give-a-Gift Christmas meets the needs of children ages 1-12, said Sheriff's Office spokesman C.J. Worden.

"Yes, the Union County Sheriff's Office once again is

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Thanks for the memories J.W.

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

That's what comes to mind when you think about retiring Union County Tax Commissioner J.W. Payne.

When Payne was elected to office in 1968, he shared a ballot with Richard Nixon, who defeated Hubert H. Humphrey and George Wallace to claim the office of the President of the United States.

The Beatles were still a group and Neil Armstrong was nine months away from taking his "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

As much as the world around him changed, Payne remained the stalwart for the taxpayers of the Union County.

For the next 44 years, Payne would dedicate his life to serving the good people of Union County.

"I've seen a lot of changes in 44 years but the best part of it all was getting to meet people," Payne said. "I'll never forget working for all the good people of this progressive county."

Payne, who has seen sheriffs and county commis-



Retiring Union County Tax Commissioner J.W. Payne talks with friends during his retirement party last week at the Union County Community Center. Payne is retiring after 44 years in office. Photo/Todd Forrest

sioners come and go, reflected on his early days as Tax Commissioner.

"When I took office, I knew everyone in the county," he said. "Things have changed a lot since then. In my first year, we gave the School

Board \$11,000. Now we give them nearly \$14 million."

During Payne's retirement celebration at the Union County Community Center last week, he was surrounded by family, friends, and co-workers. Each congratulated

the "man of the hour" in his 44 great years. It's easy to see why Payne was so appreciated by the hardworking folks of Union County.

The outgoing Tax Commissioner has always had

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Union County honors its recycling volunteers

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Union County's Neighborhood Recycle program honored its award-winning volunteers last week with a soup and sandwich lunch in the Jury Assembly Room located at the Union County Courthouse.

The luncheon was sponsored by Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris' Office in appreciation for all the hard work and time the

volunteers dedicate to the program.

"The recycling program is a success due to the work of the volunteers and we just wanted to say thank you for a job well done," said Paris. "The county asked for the program and we have tried to give it to them and without the volunteers it couldn't happen. We couldn't afford it."

North Georgia Resource Management Authority Director Leslie George was on hand

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Union County Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris thanked recycling volunteers last week at the Union County Courthouse. Photo/Joe Collins

Union's softball heroes honored on Sunday

By Todd Forrest
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

Young Harris - The Union County Lady Panthers softball team held its year-end banquet on Sunday night at Brothers Restaurant at Willow Branch in Young Harris.

Those honored on Sunday were seniors Carly Adams, Bailey Byers, Shawna Brown, Hannah Hughes, Amber Seeba, and sophomore Courtney Busbee.

After the players, their families, and coaches enjoyed a delicious meal, Lady Panthers' Head Coach Jessica Stewart and Assistant Coach



Union County honored its legendary softball team on Sunday night. Left to right, Amber Seeba, Hannah Hughes, Bailey Byers, Shawna Brown, Carly Adams and Courtney Busbee. Photo/Todd Forrest.

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Feds indict former St. Francis priest Poandl

By Charles Duncan
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The man credited with helping bring the Catholic Church to Blairsville faces federal charges related to a 1991 child molestation case out of West Virginia.

According to Glenmary Home Missioners, a federal indictment against Father Robert Poandl was unsealed on Nov. 15th in Hamilton County, Ohio.

Father Poandl oversaw Catholic churches in Blairsville, Cleveland and Dahlonega in the late 1970s and early 1980s, according to the Glenmary Home Missioners' Website.

The priest was charged with transporting a minor across state lines with intent to engage in sexual activity, according to a release by Glenmary.

The charges are related to a June 2009 accusation of sexual misconduct with a minor said to have occurred in 1991 in Spencer, West Virginia. The 2009 charges against Father Poandl were dismissed by a West Virginia court in August 2010 and Father Poandl's record was expunged, according to Glenmary.



Father Robert Poandl

Following the Nov. 15 hearing, Father Poandl was held in the Butler County Jail in Hamilton, Ohio, until his next hearing on Monday.

"On the morning of Nov. 15 Father Poandl, who was traveling with a fellow Glenmarian, voluntarily surrendered himself to the FBI upon being notified by Glenmary's president, Father Chet Artysiewicz, of the warrant for his arrest," according to a release by Glenmary.

Father Poandl immediately reported to the FBI field office in Cincinnati, the release stated.

Glenmary also received a subpoena, via U.S. Mail, on the afternoon of Nov. 14. The subpoena ordered the release

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C.H.A.M.P.S. makes a difference for kids

By Joe Collins
North Georgia News
Staff Writer

C.H.A.M.P.S. has turned out yet another graduating class.

Children today face dangers and life choices that older generations never even dreamed about. It is a known fact that one of the best deterrents to improper behavior in children is education.

With these factors in mind, the Union County Sheriff's Office and Sheriff Scott



Union County Sheriff Scott Stephens honors an essay winner during C.H.A.M.P.S. graduation last week at UCES. Photo/Joe Collins

Stephens, initiated a program at Union County Elementary School's fifth grade through the Georgia Sheriff's Association called Choosing Healthy Activities and Methods Promoting Safety or otherwise know throughout the Georgia school systems as C.H.A.M.P.S.

The 10-week C.H.A.M.P.S. course looks at the dangers and pitfalls that children face on a daily basis through activities in the home

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UCHS Basketball
Tuesday, November 27 • 6pm
@ Andrews, NC

UCHS Wrestling
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