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In 1985, the *North Georgia News* reached out to Duncan, asking if he'd like to come aboard to write sports, which was another of Duncan's lifelong passions.

For the next seven years, Duncan provided local coverage for the Union County Panthers in his hometown newspaper, all the while continuing to work for TRW.

"And in 1992, I got a call that the *Gainesville Times* might be interested in having me on their district staff, so I went for a three-story tryout," Duncan said. "Ironically, nobody ever told me if I ever passed that three-story tryout, but in 1999 I left the Times for an opportunity with Community Newspapers, Incorporated in Dawsonville."

There, Duncan continued to flourish under the leadership of Terri Blackwell, and it was in Dawsonville that Duncan formed many friendships that have lasted to this day.

"I worked with a young gentleman by the name of Bo Wilson, and together we formed quite a team in Dawsonville," Duncan said, adding that Wilson traveled to the mountains to fill in for him during his first heart surgery

and recovery in 2009.

Duncan remained in Dawsonville until 2005, when he received an offer to work for a paper in Pawleys Island, South Carolina. His stint there was short-lived, however, as he was wooed back after only six months to Dawsonville with a better offer from his previous newspaper.

He again stayed in Dawsonville, this time until October 2008, which is when he received the call of his lifetime, presenting him with the chance to come back home.

"Kenneth West gave me a call, asked me if I'd be interested in being the editor of the *Towns County Herald*, and I said, sure," Duncan said. "So I came to Blairsville, I interviewed, and the rest is history."

"In 2012, he called me and he asked me if I'd be interested in being the editor in Blairsville, and I said, well, you sign my paycheck. He said, how soon can you get here?"

Working as editor of the *North Georgia News*, his hometown paper, stood out for Duncan as a great moment and highpoint of his life and career – after all, his own mother had worked for the *North Georgia News* years earlier, and it was

in Blairsville that his work in journalism began.

"It was an opportunity to bring real journalism to the mountains and keep it going, with two top-notch newspapers," Duncan said. "And I really feel like we do have two top-notch newspapers in the *Towns County Herald* and the *North Georgia News*. "We have two newspapers that bring a lot of news to those two communities each week. We do our best to keep people informed. I'm sure there are things that we could do to improve, but we're happy to be a part of the big picture in those two communities."

When Duncan returns to his post as editor, hopefully come mid-March, he looks forward to continuing his pursuit of journalism in the North Georgia Mountains.

"I think that we've raised the level, we've raised the bar for our competition and our neighboring counties," Duncan said. "I think that there's a lot of newspapers that would like to be like us, and I think there's a lot of newspapers that take a lot of ideas from us. That, to me, the way that's unfolding, tells me that we're doing something right."

## NC man arrested after joyriding to jail

By Shawn Jarrard  
North Georgia News  
Staff Writer

A North Carolina man is behind bars at the Union County Jail on several charges related to a joyriding event that occurred the evening of Tuesday, Jan. 26.

Devan Whisper Jackson, 20, of Sylva, NC, was arrested on charges of obstructing a law enforcement officer, theft by bringing stolen property into state, use of plate to conceal identity of vehicle, driving while license suspended/revoked, and fleeing/attempting to elude police, according to the Blairsville Police Department.

"Officer Dustin Walker and myself were on patrol here in the city when dispatch issued a BOLO (be on the lookout) for a brand new White Dodge Ram Dually pickup truck that was stolen out of Franklin, NC," said Sgt. Shawn Dyer with the Blairsville Police. "And it was believed that the truck might be en route to Union County Jail."

"At this time, Officer Walker was patrolling on Glenn Gooch Bypass when he noticed a brand new Dodge Dually pickup. Officer Walker got behind the pickup and ran the tag on the pickup, and the tag came back to a different truck."

The tag came back to a 1993 Dodge Dakota truck, according to Sgt. Dyer, not a brand new Dodge Ram Dually – always a big red flag for police.

"He followed the truck up Beasley Street toward the jail, and when he got to the jail parking lot, Officer Walker initiated a traffic stop on the vehicle," said Sgt. Dyer. "The vehicle came to a stop, and Officer Walker started to get out of his car. As he was getting out of his car, the pickup took off. At that time, Officer Walker jumped back in his car and initiated a short chase, where the truck went straight up Beasley Street."

The Dodge Ram continued onto AJ's Holler at a high rate of speed, and Sgt. Dyer, who had been making his way up Glenn Gooch Bypass, said he could see the lights of the vehicle in question up around the area of the jail.

"I continued to go around to Town Mountain Road to cut the vehicle off in case it came all the way through," said Sgt. Dyer.

It had started raining, and since the section of the road that Officer Walker and the Ram were on was dirt and gravel, the Ram struggled to get up the hill, slinging mud and rocks onto Officer Walker's windshield and patrol car, according to the police department.

The truck came to a stop close to the top of the hill on AJ's Holler, having dug itself into the muddy roadway, according to Sgt. Dyer.

"The driver bailed out and took off, running on foot," said Sgt. Dyer. "There were two other people in the truck besides the driver. Officer Walker stayed with the two other people in the truck until a deputy arrived behind him in just a few seconds, then Officer Walker took after the guy running."

The pursuit continued on foot into the woods, and Deputy Sheriff Jeff McConnell with the Union County Sheriff's Office brought K-9 Deputy Lacey to track the driver, later identified

as Jackson, according to Sgt. Dyer.

Unfortunately, the rain had picked up and Jackson's scent had grown cold, after Lacey followed it down to Union County High School and onto the road at Panther Circle, according to Sgt. Dyer.

The two passengers in the vehicle claimed that they were unaware that the vehicle had been stolen, and one was let go while the other was held on warrants out of North Carolina for stealing vehicles, according to Sgt. Dyer.

The Union County Sheriff's Office was able to apprehend Jackson near Galaxy Bowling around 6 a.m. the next morning, and he admitted later in the day to eluding Blairsville Police the previous evening, according to Sgt. Dyer.

As it turned out, Jackson was suspected of having stolen multiple vehicles from the same car dealership in Franklin, NC, and he and his two passengers had traveled to Union County to visit with friends being held in the jail, according to the police department.

A total of seven warrants had been issued for Jackson out of Franklin, all for stealing vehicles, and the value of the vehicle he brought to Union County was \$71,000, according to Sgt. Dyer.



Devan Whisper Jackson

"It was a joint cooperation of both departments that the guy was caught and put in jail," said Sgt. Dyer, speaking of the Blairsville Police and the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Sgt. Brandon Hogsted, Deputy Alan Patton, Deputy David McGregor, Deputy Gary Hooper, Sgt. Adam Deyton, Deputy Bradley Glass, Deputy Marc Pilote and Deputy Logan Daniel, all of the Union County Sheriff's Office, assisted in the search and arrest of Jackson.

### S.A.F.E.

#### Board meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Directors of S.A.F.E. (Support in Abusive Family Emergencies, Inc.) will be held on February 16, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. Call 706-379-1901 for location.