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State that part of school funding should be adjusted (equalized) based on the income or wealth of a county. (This is a separate pot of education money from QBE funding)

To determine the wealth of individual counties, the state based it primarily on property values divided by the student population (FTE - Full Time Equivalent). Utilizing this formula method, Union County has always been ranked as one of the top wealthiest counties in Georgia (for school funding purposes), currently rated at 6 out of 180 school systems.

Q. How much of the total State funding for schools is adjusted with this "Equalization" funding?

A. It generally varies, but currently it is about 7 percent of all state K-12 QBE funding.

Q. Does Union County receive any State "Equalization" funding based on county wealth and property values?

A. No. Probably the nearest school close to our size and being in this part of the state is Banks County that receives \$456,000 in Equalization supplemental funding.

However, Barrow County, although considerably larger than us but in the general area, receives \$6,650,000 of "Equalization" funds, Stephens Co. receives \$670,000 and Habersham Co receives \$1,350,000. Other adjacent county school systems do not receive any "equalization" funding either, including Towns, Fannin, Rabun, White, Lumpkin, Gilmer and Pickens.

Q. How much would Union County property values have to decrease for us to be eligible for State "Equalization" funding?"

A. Our property values would have to be reduced by 50 percent for us to qualify, which makes it impossible.

Parts 2 & 3 continued next two weeks.

CORRECTION: In my Q & A on the Neighborhood Recycling Program for the week of Nov. 21, it was stated that our recycling program does not take brown paper bags, cereal or cracker type boxes. This is incorrect as we DO take these items now that we have a new vendor who has agreed to accept these items. We are sorry for any confusion.

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referred to as a "container".

If you envision yourself studying each piece of information as you reach it in the pile, trying to solve the puzzle as you link the content of this with the last, you are referred to as an "expander".

So which one are you?

It's actually quite useful to know this about yourself. Every unit of two or more people needs both expanders and containers in order to move forward. Containers are the organizers. Expanders are the conceptualists. They are the idea people and the containers execute the ideas of the expanders.

For example, you are planning a family trip to Disney World over the Christmas holidays.

For weeks prior to the trip, one of your kids wants to talk about all that you are going to do, and speculates what characters they will get their picture taken with when they get to the Magic Kingdom. Your other child hasn't expressed nearly the same interest until you realize that a week before the trip, her clothes

are already laid out, bathing suit and sunscreen lotion dug out from the summer storage, already for the trip south.

Every organization needs idea people and then people to execute the ideas.

If you only have expanders, you have a plethora of creative ideas and nothing gets done. With all containers, you have a well oiled machine that has no place to go.

The Farmers Market also has to have both. Today I'd like to call all of you that perceive yourself as expanders to send in your ideas for the Market. You come every week and see potential that hasn't yet been tapped.

We want to know what you see. So, simply jot these ideas down. You can call me to discuss them at (706) 781-3306. Leave a message if you don't reach me and I will call you back. Or send the list to me via email at UCFarmersMarket@gmail.com.

This winter we will be taking the ideas and planning our next season. Yes, containers. That's where you come in. See you soon.

Esposito... continued from Page 4A

danger to life or property." Flying the flag upside down in other situations is a misuse of the flag; however (and contrary to popular belief), the current Code does not impose penalties for misuse of the flag. Before 1989 the Code contained criminal penalties for certain acts of desecration to the flag, but in June, 1989, the Supreme Court held this to be unconstitutional. Later that year the Flag Protection Act was passed and it

imposed a fine and/or up to 1 year in prison for knowingly mutilating, defacing, physically defiling, maintaining on the floor or trampling upon the flag. The following year the Act was struck down by the Supreme Court. So today, anyone can mutilate, deface, defile, or otherwise desecrate the flag without fear of arrest. But they best not engage in such conduct within sight of most veterans I know.

Chuck Esposito

Fiser... continued from Page 4A

were so vividly recalled by the victim because of facts reported in the recent sex abuse scandal at Penn State University but were not previously more vividly recalled when the major Catholic Church sex abuse scandal was reported by the *Boston Globe* in 2002. Our anonymous "local" victim would have been only 30 years old then and the transgressions should have been more clearly brought to this mind!

It is odd (if I correctly understand the recent *NGN* story), that on learning of Father Poandl's current federal charges emanating from an 1991 incident in West Virginia, that our "local" victim contacted the Union County Sheriff's Department to relate his alleged abuse story. This

NGN article stated that before contacting our Sheriff's Office that "the abused" had recently reported his claims to SNAP, the national agency which handles these cases. One would surmise creation of a blatant local scandal was his motive since Father Poandl left this area many years ago. Unfortunately, *NGN* complied.

Independent congregational churches are fortunate. They can hide any "dirty linen" they might and doubtless do have from exploitation by avaricious news media. And unless I have been grossly misinformed, many non-Catholic churches carry insurance that specifically protects them from financial loss in case of confirmed staff pedophilia.

Richard Y. Fiser

Hulsey... continued from Page 4A

was his employee. I remember as a young child riding the trolley in Atlanta with my mother. Looking at the blacks wearing their bedroom shoes with holes where their toes stuck out. I asked my Mama why they were wearing their bedroom shoes. She said hush child. Later she told me those were the only shoes they had. I can feel your pain. Today when I go shopping I no longer have my mother with me, but every time I look at the shoes and see the larger siz-

es, I remember those trolley rides and feel happy just for everyone who has new shoes. There's an old children's book. It ends with a girl swinging with her brother and little sister singing. "I got shoes you got shoes. All God's chilluns got shoes." Her's were shiny new red ones. I love shiny new shoes Just as there will always be bad people, there will always be good people, too. Pray.

Jeanette Hulsey

Cummings ...continued from Page 4A

about one thing. The boys had shook and pounded the mail box so much the cat was in a complete state of terror by the time the mail man arrived. Paul heard the mailman coming down the road and in a panic the boys ran and hid. The mail man opened the box and the cat shot out of the box and into the old car. The cat made at least three laps in the car and tore up the mail, the interior of the car and the mailman before exiting the car. Nobody ever found out how Old Tom got into the Cummings Mailbox. But, the

boys were remorseful. Later when the weather turned cold Uncle Bud suggested to Granny, "Why don't we put some big rocks by the fire place and when the mailman comes we can give them to him. He can then place them under his feet to help his feet stay warm." The mailman was very appreciative and the boys never saw Old Tom again.

The next and final day of operation for the Union County Canning Plant will be December 11. The hours are 6:30 AM until 12 noon.

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living on our streets, under bridges, in cars, tents, in appliance boxes, under park benches and various places. The birth of our dear Lord Jesus reminds us that life is all

about His creation He came to save. May we, this Christmas, renew our commitment to sacrifice and serve Christ by loving and serving some of His children.

Garner...continued from Page 4A

with scouting and the Chamber is Rusty Royston. Rusty is a past Chamber Chair and has always had the Chamber in his heart. An Eagle Scout, he lives by the scout oath and motto. He has been a strong supporter of the Chamber's Leadership Union since 2003. Rusty always has an engaging way to get you to believe in yourself. To my friend and mentor Rusty, I say thanks. Jason Karnes has been a blessing in my life for several years. He was a Chamber Chair and Bank President at an early age. His membership on the Board has given a balance of business, passion and energy with just the right mix of fun that kept us laughing. Jason, thank you for all you did during your term as Chair. Erik Brinke is the Economic Development Director for Blue Ridge Mountain EMC. I have cherished the opportunity to work with Erik these last six years. He has been an absolute pleasure to work beside. Erik, you are an inspiration to me. I thank you for your service to our Chamber. When Erik finishes his Board term in December of 2012 he will have served 9 years on the Chamber Board. Thanks for your dedication to our community.

To the readers that have given me words of encouragement, thanks to you all. My final message is this thought for you to ponder. Ultimately, I feel we are here to serve others. The message of our civic clubs, churches and community is overwhelmingly to serve others. I found the following website that I think summarizes this process the best. The author, Mr. Mike King, is a passionate learner and enjoys helping others achieve their personal goals. The website is <http://learn-this.ca/2010/02/100-ways-to-serve-others/>. How do you serve others? The list of 100 ways to serve others starts with a smile. Just smile. A simple act which doesn't cost any money yet may make the difference in someone's day. It is a great habit to develop. Hold the door, a simple thing to do and a great way to serve others. Buy someone's lunch and don't make a big deal of it. Just leave it at that. Help someone achieve a goal. People struggle with goals from time to time. Ask people their goals and do what you can to help them achieve them. Another way to serve others is to listen intently to the conversation. Others will feel valued that you took the time to listen and pay attention. Volunteer in your community. We have numerous programs, civic clubs, groups and community associations. Become a mentor to someone by encouraging words or offering guidance to them. Another way to serve others is to be genuine with your apologies if you make a mistake. Own up to it and make the appropriate apology in person. Choose to be happy. Happiness is not something you seek, it's not something you can gain using the "if only" scenario.

Happiness is something you must believe you can have and you then have to choose to be happy. Be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm builds positive energy in others. Enthusiasm is contagious. Take a moment and look at the list of 100 ways to serve others. You will be glad you did. I began writing 23 months ago about your Chamber of Commerce. If you have not considered membership, please do. If you are one of our 550+ chamber members, I want to thank you for your membership. If interested in a Chamber membership, please contact the Membership Coordinator, Robin Story at (706) 745-5789. I may be reached anytime at chair@BlairsvilleChamber.com or go to www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com for more information.

Mitchell...

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Let's be clear: Chamber bliss is "open" to raising taxes at the FEDERAL level.

Once again, Chamber bliss isn't a REPRESENTATIVE of the people of Georgia. He's a UNITED STATES Senator. His vote affects 300,000,000+ people.

It's time he retired -- by personal choice or by the vote of the federal taxpayers of Georgia.

P.S. Add all taxes together and you'll learn that every Dollar earned is now taxed at the 50% level. By the way, 50% of Americans pay no Income Tax.

George Mitchell

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