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from a variety of organizations and individuals. To all those who give of their time and treasure, I appreciate you.

I encourage you this season to take a moment to thank those individuals in your life who have made you a better person or given you an opportunity you might not otherwise have had. If you

are a business owner or community member who would like to learn more about being a member of the Blairsville-Union County Chamber of Commerce, give us a call at 706-745-5789 or explore our website at [www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com](http://www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com). I can be reached anytime at [President@BlairsvilleChamber.com](mailto:President@BlairsvilleChamber.com).

## Leone... continued from Page 4A

My Uncle Joe was a cantankerous kind of guy. He saw the glass about one third full, at best. When I was about 7 years old, he found a tender heartstring and he attached it to me. When I would be visiting the paternal side of the family in the summer, my uncle would take me everywhere with him. I got to sit up high in his big truck and see his little town from a whole new perspective. He was the main "fix it" guy at the American Legion, and when they called him with another issue, I was by his side. He'd hoist me up on a barstool and order me a Shirley Temple while he did his chores. Then he'd take my hand and we'd walk back to the truck, having completed the job, together.

My paternal grandmother played cards with us by the hour. My Aunt taught me how to make "to die for" chicken soup. My maternal grandmother taught me how to bake a cake and make butter cream frosting, the only kind of frosting that will ever grace my cakes.

I do not remember opening any specific gift from any of these relatives. And as many gifts as I was given from my parents over the years, there isn't even one gift that resides in my memory as do the evenings spent decorating the tree, singing carols, reading the Christmas story and going to midnight mass, together. I remember the time that was shared with me.

And it wasn't just time that they "fit in," distracted by calls from work, or compiling to-do lists on the cell phone,

while they watched from afar as I played with kids I didn't know at some McDonald's jungle gym. It was time that was dedicated to just me. Or it was time that they had to spend doing something, and they made me feel it was time better spent if I was with them.

Most television commercials are 15 seconds long. A few sound bites and the "pitch" has been made. Public commercials are almost always four times as long. They are a full minute of narrative, talking about the best of our lives, never mentioning the product until the final 3 seconds. This year's Christmas commercial shows three generations, doing things together; baking, tree decorating, playing "rough house" and gathering together to give thanks. They leave us with this thought. "So look around and be reminded that even though gifts are nice, we probably have everything we ever wished for...."

This Christmas, and throughout the coming year, give a child you love the gift of time. It will be a gift they unwrap with their hearts for the rest of their lives.

## Ramsey...

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the way of income tax?

Logically speaking (but, where has logic been allowed to determine anything?), it is the "rich" who should be demanding that ALL Americans pay "their fair share," in return for the privilege of living in this country.  
**Ruth Elizabeth Ramsey**

## Paris ...continued from Page 4A

dent population and received \$0 based on "Equalization funding" as did most North Georgia mountain counties.

**Q. Can Union County property values be artificially lowered to help us with state funding for our schools?**

A. NO. If we did, the state would automatically adjust them back up based on actual sales studies. State law determines how property is appraised and it cannot be adjusted for any purpose.

**Q. Are there other funding methods other than "Equalization" funding that the school system receives based on county property values?**

A. Yes. It is called Local Fair Share funding.

This number is directly based on property values and it fluctuates as county property values go up or down. It is estimated that if the State holds their education funding at last year's levels, based on the decrease in property values in Union County in the past year, the school system would gain approximately \$200,000 in state revenue.

**Q. How much did the property values in Union County decrease this past year?**

A. They decreased from \$3.451 billion down to \$3.109 billion, or a decrease of \$342 million (10 percent).

*Part 3 Continued next week.*

## Cummings ...continued from Page 4A

vin and the Labor Day BBQ. Calvin was recognized for his efforts at a big gathering. A local hospital was recognizing people for their volunteer efforts. Calvin was one of the people to be recognized and he was very nervous at the ceremony. A local minister was the guest speaker and he talked about how the priests of ancient Israel got their pay for services. They were basically given portions of the sacrific-

es they received from people coming to the temple. These priests would get bread, grain, beef, lamb or goat meat depending on the offering given at the time. This person sitting beside Calvin whispered, "I am glad I am not a priest. I just couldn't eat one of those goats." Calvin looked at her and grinned. She happened to be one of his best customers over the past 3 years.

## Malone... continued from Page 4A

are submitted for and which test positive for rabies in the eastern U.S. Domestic animals can contract rabies when they come into contact with rabid wildlife. It is important to note that the reported incidence of rabies in cats has been on the rise in the past 2 years, and pet owners should get all of their pets, especially outdoor roaming and barn cats, vaccinated against rabies.

Dogs and cats need to be vaccinated against rabies at least twice within a year in order to create immunity against the disease; after that they should be vaccinated against rabies every 3 years to keep their immunity strong. Your local veterinarian can recommend a vaccination schedule that fits your animal and keeps with state laws.  
**Cheryl Malone**  
*Retired Animal Control Officer*

## Black... continued from Page 4A

ment parts, energy used in production of an agricultural product and other inputs which were previously not exempt. I want to thank the Governor, the Lt. Governor, the Speaker and the General Assembly for passing this meaningful piece of legislation that will help agricultural producers during these trying economic times.

As part of this legislation, all agricultural producers must register with the Georgia Department of Agriculture underneath the Georgia Agriculture Tax Exemption program which goes into effect January 1, 2013. At this time, all other agriculture exemptions will be repealed. If you are an agricultural producer and would like to receive this tax exemption, you must qualify as Qualified Agriculture Producer in Georgia through the Georgia Department of Agriculture.

There are two ways you can apply; the first one is visit our website at [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov) with the online application, or you print off the application and mail it into the Department. You can also pick up your applications at your local Farm Bureau office.

If you have any questions regarding this new program, I would like to encourage you to visit our website at [www.agr.georgia.gov](http://www.agr.georgia.gov), or call (855) FARM TAX. My staff and I are available to make this process as seamless as possible.

Thank you for supporting the agricultural com-

munity in Georgia. I hope you and your family have a truly blessed holiday season.  
**Gary Black**  
*Georgia's Agriculture*

## Mitchell... continued from Page 4A

than half of that tax bill comes from the school board.

The local school board is the greatest consumer of tax money and they have no legal check against their spendthrift nature. The Assembly must be reminded that the children are the reason for the schools, but that homeowners are the Goose that lays the Golden Egg. Local

school boards can be profligate with other people's money as they determine "need."

That Goose is running low on eggs. Unless and until the Assembly defines their limits, local school boards have no effective check on their definition of "need." Hoping your Christmas is blessed.  
**George Mitchell**

Chamber of Commerce events	
For details and future events see events calendar at <a href="http://www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com">www.VisitBlairsvilleGA.com</a>	
<b>Wednesday, December 12</b>	
2pm	Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad
6:30pm	Wine Pairing Dinner with Tripp Donelan of Donelan Wines The Copper Door, Hayesville
<b>Thursday, December 13</b>	
8am	Mountain Networking Referral Group monthly meeting – Cooks Restaurant
12pm	Rotary Club of Union County – Cadence Bank
7pm	Thursday Night Karaoke – You Be The Star! – The Lodge at Copperhead
<b>Friday, December 14</b>	
9am	Open House at WAVES – 40 Town Square
2pm	Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad
6pm	The Biggest Little Holiday Party – Brasstown Valley Resort
7pm	Enchanted Valley Squares – 67 Lakeview Circle, Hiawassee
<b>Saturday, December 15</b>	
10am	Christmas at Art Center Open House – Blue Ridge
2pm	Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad
<b>Monday, December 17</b>	
12pm	Blairsville Kiwanis Club Monthly Meeting – Steve's Cookie Jar Restaurant
6pm	Free Texas Hold'em Tournament – Lodge at Copperhead
<b>Tuesday, December 18</b>	
8am	Tri-State Business Women's meeting – Cooks Restaurant
<b>Wednesday, December 19</b>	
2pm	Tour Misty Mountain Model Railroad
2pm	Friends of Union County Library Meeting

## UNION COUNTY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Every Monday:		
Garden Tours	GMREC	9 am - 1 pm
Boy Scouts #101	United Methodist Ch	7 pm
Children's Story Time	Union County Library	11 am
Kiwanis Club	Steve's Steakhouse	Noon
Civil Air Patrol	Blairsville Airport	6:30 pm
Every Tuesday:		
Mtn. Woodcarvers	Senior Center	6 pm
Sweet Adelines	United Methodist Ch	6:30 pm
Every Thursday:		
Masonic Luncheon	Cooks Restaurant	11:30 am
Rotary Club	Cadence Bank	Noon
Third Monday of each month:		
High Country Artisan	U.C.Bank Com Room	6:30 pm
Exp Aviation Assoc #1211	Blairsville Airport	7 pm
Allegheny Lodge	Masonic Temple	7:30 pm
Prostate Cancer Sup.	U.C. Cancer Center	5 pm
Third Tuesday of each month:		
UC Anti-Drug Coal.	Conference Room	Noon
American Legion, Aux	Civic Center	7 pm
Chatuge Gun Club	Senior Center, Hia.	7 pm
UC Homemakers	Dooley Chapter	Noon
Am. Legion Post 121	Old Civic Center	7 pm
Ladies Aux. Post 121	Old Civic Center	7 pm
Third Wednesday of each month:		
Blairsville Garden Club	Location not listed	1 pm
Friends of the Library	Library Com Room	2 pm
Beta Sigma Phi, Iota Iota,	Cadence Bank	7 pm
Third Thursday of each month:		
Jaycees	Fort Sorghum	7:30 pm
Tip-off Club	UC High School	7 pm
UC Saddle Club	Arena Clubhouse	7 pm
Commissioner's Meet.	County Courthouse	6 pm
UT Home Builders	Moschetto's	6:30 pm
Shape Note Music	Old Courthouse	6:30 pm
Kinship Care	Civic Center	Noon
MOPS	First Baptist Church	6 pm
Third Friday of each month:		
No activities listed		
Third Saturday of each month:		
Goldwing Road Riders	Daniels Steak House	11 am

## Collins

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I can't begin to tell you how much the entire gesture meant to me. People who never knew Kenny stepped up and worked to build something in honor of my child. For the last two years classmates of Kenny's have met and held what we like to call *Kenny's Walk*. We walk around the school grounds and spend time together remembering Kenny. Telling stories and just catching up on the happening of their lives. My *Boys of Fall* will run the bank just like they had to at football practice and they allow me to share this day as they make the journey on in their own lives.

My heart is not only broken by the loss of my son, but also by another tragedy. Sometime over the last two weeks it appears that someone accidentally backed in to Kenny's Memorial. They did not let anyone know that this had happened. Accidents happen, I understand that. However, I am asking for the person responsible to step forward so that your auto insurance can repair the damage. I do not have my son to walk with me everyday any longer, but I do have my memories and the memorials that we choose to use as a way to honor his memory. I miss you everyday Rooster. Love mom.  
**Cheli Collins**