

# Burglary... continued from page 1

Richards being dispatched to the scene. Towns County sheriff's detective, Lt. Brian Wilson, soon was summoned to the residence to aid in the investigation.

A list of items taken was soon compiled as Wilson and Detective Curt Donaldson worked with the home owner to gather those details, according to sheriff's reports.

Among the many items taken, a very large projection television, a Cub Cadet utility vehicle, furniture from several rooms within the home, outdoor power tools and several other items, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

According to the Towns County Sheriff's Office, the quantity of items taken during the alleged heist was so large that the persons responsible for the burglary allegedly spent two days completing the crime.

The home owner and detectives estimated the to-

tal value of the stolen items to be into the tens of thousands of dollars.

Detectives Wilson and Donaldson worked quickly to develop information regarding the burglary. The fruits of their labors led them to a residence in northern Hall County.

The trek to Hall County began after Wilson discovered physical evidence at the burglary scene which led the Towns County detectives across the mountain.

There, a suspect was interviewed and warrants were sought for his arrest in addition to search warrants regarding a location in White county, sheriff's reports show.

Authorities in White and Hall counties were contacted by TCSO to provide assistance in the case. During the course of the investigation, detectives also discovered a quantity of illegal drugs in Hall County.

That discovery widened

the scope of the investigation.

Three separate jurisdictions became involved in the case which now included an investigation into both illegal drugs and stolen property. Within a day's time, detectives for two agencies were granted separate search warrants for locations in both Hall and White counties. Some of the larger items stolen from the Towns County residence were recovered and have already been returned to the homeowner, Towns County sheriff's reports show.

Other elements pertaining to the case are still under investigation and more details will be released as they become available, according to the Towns County Sheriff's Office.

Narcotics arrests are expected as a result of the details stemming from this case in other counties, Towns County sheriff's reports show.



A trailer believed stolen from another county in North Georgia was used to transport a utility vehicle taken during a recent burglary in Towns County. Photo/Courtesy Towns County Sheriff's Office

# SPLOST...continued from page 1

"The Towns County Board of Education has been using the current 1 percent ELOST for several years, but last year, they voted not to continue it when it expires June 30," Commissioner Kendall said.

"If the SPLOST is approved, it begins on July 1, and keeps the sales tax rate the same as it is right now. It is not a tax increase," he said.

Commissioner Kendall felt an explanation was in order considering that he had been swamped with telephone calls from residents in fear that the SPLOST was a tax increase.

"By no means would this be a tax increase," he said. "It's an extension, not an increase."

Early voting for the referendum begins Feb. 21 at 91 Berrong Street, the Old Rock Jail. The Election Day is March 15 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Residents must register to vote by Monday, Feb. 14 to be able to cast a ballot in the election.

Commissioner Kendall also explained that necessary improvements for the county cannot be made without an approved SPLOST.

"If the SPLOST is not approved many projects will have to be eliminated," Commissioner Kendall said.

Those projects include recreational facilities, sewer upgrades benefiting economic development, increasing the number of fire hydrants and fire equipment that would help lower homeowners' insurance rates.

Several projects that include additional ambulances, road repairs, matching funds for a \$1.8 million library grant and essential fire equipment would have to be paid from taxpayer pockets.

"A successful SPLOST means we'll have help paying for necessary city and county projects from the folks who come to visit us during the tourism season," Commissioner Kendall said. "The 1 cent sales tax comes from not just the folks who live here, but from the people who come to visit us and shop in Towns County."

"It's paid by everyone who shops in Towns County, including tourists, visitors and part-time residents," Commissioner Kendall said.

The SPLOST would pay for parks and recreation, roads and bridges, fire hydrants, library upgrades, pro-

tecting the mountains and streams in Towns County. It also would pay for new ambulances and public safety vehicles as well as economic development infrastructure.

Best of all, Shirley Stallings said she supports it because of the potential for a property tax rollback after all projects are paid for. Any revenues above the amount designated for SPLOST projects is guaranteed to go toward property tax relief.

Civic groups that include the Towns County Homeowners Association have endorsed the SPLOST referendum. They also put their money where their mouth is by donating \$200 in support of Citizens for Towns County Progress Committee.

On Feb. 19, a pancake breakfast is scheduled at the Towns County Senior Center to raise money for SPLOST referendum awareness. Tickets are \$5 for adults, \$2 for children ages 6-10 and free for children under 5 years old.

**Contact Jane Holland at (706) 896-4966 for more details on how to purchase a pancake breakfast ticket.**

# Lee Knight to perform at Folk School

Folksinger Lee Knight will be featured in concert in the Community Room at The John C. Campbell Folk School in Brasstown, NC at 7:30 p.m. on February 11th. The concert is free although donations are welcome.

Lee Knight hails from the Adirondack Mountains of New York and became interested in folk music while in high school. He was introduced to traditional Southern Appalachian music while attending Wofford College in Spartanburg, SC. As a result, Lee became interested in learning first hand from singers and musicians who carried on the traditions in their families and communities. He has studied folk music in his native Adirondacks, the southern Appalachians, Canada, Russia, Central Asia, Scotland, Colombia and Peru. He performs in community concerts, schools, camps, continuing education classes and libraries around the country accompanying himself on guitar, banjo and mountain dulcimer. He appears regularly at the Asheville Mountain Dance and Folk Song Festival



Folksinger Lee Knight

and has performed the music and voice-over for the documentary video The Nantahala: Land of the Noonday Sun.

Upcoming concert series performers at the Folk School include The Lone Mountain Band (February 18) and Blue Eyed Girl (March 4). The Friday night concert schedule is available on the world wide web at <http://www.folkschool.org>. For further information, call the Folk School at 828-837-2775 or 1-800-FOLK-SCH. NT1Feb9,27JCA

# TCMS Ladies...continued from page 1

Banks County.

"It's been an exciting season," Head Coach Lana Parker said. "We had a couple of hard games with Rabun County and one that we lost to Union County, but my girls have always seemed to come back improve and do their very best."

The Lady Indians breezed to the title game with a 32-8 win over Commerce earlier last week.

"It seems like we have a hard time getting started

in the first and second quarter but then we pull it out in the third and fourth," Coach Parker said. "That is what we did the day of the tournament."

The Lady Indians capitalized on a repeat performance by Morgan in capturing their third win of the season against the Lady Leopards.

"We beat Banks County for the third time this season," Coach Parker said. "The high scorer in

that game was Tori Morgan. She came out and sunk some 3-pointers for us that really helped us win the game. She had an awesome defensive night as well; she did great."

Morgan and Lindemuth were both named to the All-Tournament team.

In addition to the scoring efforts by Morgan and Lindemuth, Madison Johnson added 4 points, Alyssa Pyle and Carly Gilfilian both scored 2 points each.

# Taxpayer Protection Act in motion

Special To Towns County Herald [tcherald@windstream.net](mailto:tcherald@windstream.net)

ATLANTA – District 50 State Sen. Jim Butterworth (R-Cornelia) has co-sponsored Senate Resolution 20 better known as the "Taxpayer Protection Act of 2011."

The proposed Constitutional Amendment would limit how many tax dollars the state of Georgia can spend in any given year.

"We have seen what too much spending and too much debt have done to our Federal government," Sen. Butterworth said. "The Taxpayer Protection Act will ensure that will never happen to state government. It puts a Constitutional limit on how much state government can spend. The voters sent me here to keep government spending in check. That's exactly what I plan to do."

Senate Majority



State Sen. Jim Butterworth

Leader Chip Rogers, the resolution's sponsor, is in full support of the Taxpayer Protection Act.

"Senator Butterworth has proven during his years of service that he will work on behalf of the taxpayer to control spending and control the size of government," Sen. Rogers said. "I really appreciate his leadership on this important issue. The Taxpayer Protection Act will protect future generations of Georgians from government growing

too large."

Senate Resolution 20 would restrict the state from spending any money in excess of the previous year's budget adjusted for inflation and population. Any additional revenue beyond the spending limitations would be required to go into the Rainy Day Fund until it reaches a point of 15 percent of the previous year's spending. Once the Rainy Day Fund is at 15 percent, additional revenue would be used to slowly phase-out the state income tax.

The Amendment was approved last week by the Senate Finance Committee in a unanimous bi-partisan vote.

Sen. Butterworth represents the 50th Senate District which includes Towns, Banks, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Rabun, and Stephens counties and a portion of White County.

# Writers' Night Out February 11

This month, Writers' Night Out features poet Tracey Schmidt in an evening of literary and musical entertainment. The event takes place at Green to Bean Coffee House in Hiawassee on Friday, February 11 at 7 p.m. Those who'd like to share their own poetry or fiction can participate in the Open Microphone portion of the program which follows Schmidt's reading. Music will be provided by hammered dulcimer player Mary Sparks.

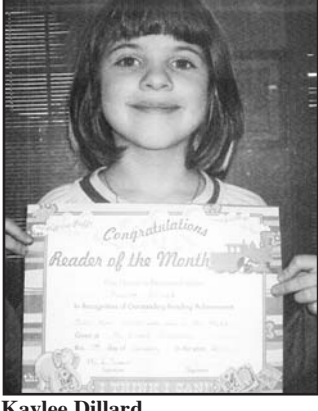
Schmidt's first book of poetry, *I Have Fallen in Love with the World*, has just been released. She has taught creativity at Julia Cameron's (author of *The Artist's Way*) Taos Creativity Camp and continues to teach in the Asheville area, where she now lives. Schmidt attended college in Atlanta, studying literature and photography. At the age of 19, she moved to Japan to live in a Buddhist monastery. Her spiritual practices there awakened a desire to return to the U.S. in search of a tradition that was as authentic and indigenous here as Buddhism has been in Japan. Her photog-

raphy exhibit, *The Awakening of Turtle Island: Portraits of Native Americans* was the result. It opened in Atlanta for the Olympics and has toured over 16 museums in the southeast, including the Cherokee Museum of the American Indian. It will begin a national tour in 2012.

Writers' Night Out takes place the second Friday evening of each month. Green to Bean Coffee House is located at 538 Bell Creek Road in Hiawassee, next to the Humane Society Thrift Shop and across from McDonald's. Come early to get a seat: The event has been well-attended by enthusiastic audiences. The evening is free and open to the public. Light snacks and refreshments, including coffees from freshly roasted beans, are available for purchase.

Those interested in reading at the Open Mic may sign up at the event. Each writer will have three minutes to read. For more information, please contact Karen Holmes at (404) 316-8466 or [kpaulholmes@gmail.com](mailto:kpaulholmes@gmail.com), or call Green to Bean at 706-896-4524. TF1Feb9,F2JSH

# Dillard Reader of Month



Kaylee Dillard

Kaylee Dillard from Mrs. Evan's 2nd Grade Accelerated Reading Class achieved recognition on January 5 for reading over 40,000 words (43,810). This program is in addition to regular classroom work. Kaylee's favorites for personal reading include the *Little House* books, *Titanic* Books, and anything about *Sitting Bull*. She also likes to read "baby" books to her little sister. Kaylee's parents are Royce and Beth Dillard. TF1Feb9,G1JSH