

# Taxpayer...continued from page 1

the State of Georgia," Kiker said.

That means a majority of the voters of Towns County must approve any long-term debt provisions in the future.

"It is my strong belief that taxpayers should have a vote on any transaction that requires them to foot the bill for many years. The proposed Taxpayer Empowerment Act restores the intended power of the Constitution to the voters," Commissioner Kendall said following the second reading of the ordinance at the July Commission meeting at the Towns County Courthouse.

Following the second reading, Commissioner Kendall adopted the measure, and the act became local legislation.

Commissioner Kendall said that during his tenure as sole commissioner, he has become aware of taxpayers and property owners in other counties that have been obligated for millions in long-term debt by a commissioner or board of county commissioners with those taxpaying property owners' property standing good as collateral for debt that last as long as 30 years or more.

"This tax burden has been placed upon the property owners by these Commissioners without the debt first being authorized by approval in a referendum of the voters, as originally required and intended by the

Constitution of the State of Georgia," Commissioner Kendall said. "Commissioners in other counties are circumventing this constitutional requirement of voter approval by using a gimmick known as Lease Purchase Agreements with lending institutions," Commissioner Kendall said. "This plan allows county commissioners to enter into an agreement with a lending institution to construct elaborate multi-million dollar government buildings without voter approval."

According to Commissioner Kendall a lending institution, or other financing entity, actually purchases and takes title to the property and the county then leases the building on a year-to-year basis with a buyout provision for the government to take title at the end of the lease term.

That action, he said, allows those governments to skate around the Constitutional requirement of voter approval for long-term debt.

"Technically, since the county does not own the building and only leases it on a year-to-year term, the county is not borrowing money for more than one year," Commissioner Kendall said.

"These procedures and practices establish the potential for fiscal irresponsibility and to place the taxpayers and property owners of a county responsible for a tremendous long-term debt load without their approval

through a referendum," Commissioner Kendall said.

Towns County will not enter into certificates of participation programs or lease purchase agreements, which seek to circumvent the limitations and provisions for voter approval on long-term county debt without a referendum in favor of that debt, Commissioner Kendall said.

Theoretically, the voters of Towns County could elect future commissioners committed to undoing the Taxpayer Empowerment Act, Commissioner Kendall said.

"I am appointing a standing citizens' commission to protect the Taxpayer Empowerment Act by staying abreast, alerting the public and attending any meeting that attempts to take away the rights it restores to the taxpayers and voters," Commissioner Kendall said. "The non-partisan commission will consist of community leaders of all political parties, independents, homeowner association presidents, you name it."

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the standing citizens' commission can call (706) 896-2277 or (706) 994-4644, Commissioner Kendall said.

"I have confidence that Towns County's new and long time residents alike will band together to protect, defend and keep these taxpayer and voter rights restored to them by the Taxpayer Empowerment Act," Commissioner Kendall said.

ceiling of the basement. This is crisis #1. On the same day, but a different house, crisis #2 is the septic backs up and overflows the toilet which then goes into the bedroom.

In both situations the rooms must be dried down in

the correct way. Knowing how to do it and using a professional company to do is critical.

Your Professional Landlord,  
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## Letters from the Mountains

Deborah Burford

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### Grandson of Mangefur?

Remember Mangefur (named for a bad character in the "Redwall" series by Brian Jacques)...the huge opossum that was raiding the birdseed supply about 8 years ago? He was caught in our Have-A-Heart trap and relocated to the distant wilds. Last night I was awakened by a noise from the kitchen. Assuming that intruders usually do not break into a home just to rattle the pots and pans, I got up to investigate. Of course, I had my trusty dogs with me. (I cannot go to the loo without them these days! With Jack gone, they have risen to Full Guard Duty.)

Ambling across the countertop was a young 'possum. There was nothing edible to find, you understand, but he was optimistic. I remembered Big Dog's favorite trick and threw a towel over him, then grabbed his tail. He tried climbing up his tail, but I shook him back down, having learned the "tail-flick" maneuver, which worked a treat. I dropped him over the side of the deck and he scurried off into the dark muttering words I'm certain his mother never taught him.

The word "opossum" is a proto-Algonquin word meaning "white-faced dog." They are useful little thieves, and are immune (mostly) to rattlesnake & copperhead venom. They do not hang by their prehensile tails, as often pictured, and are unlikely to carry rabies—much less likely than a wild dog, for example. (This

does not apply to 'possums behaving strangely. Avoid them at all costs.) Nonetheless, I declined to encounter those teeth. Better safe... They are omnivores: they'll eat anything, which includes road kill, insects, snakes, and garbage. They especially like avocados, so they cannot be all bad; I do, too.

This little intruder was well-armed with needle-like teeth and there was no "playing 'possum" with him. Like his presumed grandparent, he was ready for war. After the flick he just hung down and enjoyed his ride to the edge of the deck. I hope he learned that human houses were not suitable foraging grounds and will tell his buddies.

The two cats remained on the bed during this adventure. When I returned, I asked them where they had been, for heaven's sake? They suddenly became interested in the ceiling. Rapping on the bedside table for attention, I said sternly, "You're supposed to keep wildlife out of the house."

Caylee, self-appointed spokescat, said snifflily, "Peaches, we each have 30 teeth; it had fifty. We weigh eleven pounds; Tubby tipped the scales at fifteen. Do the math. Now we don't object to an occasional infant 'possum—one that has fallen from the pouch, say. But we draw the line at teenagers with reckless abandon and a full compliment of fangs." She sneezed to add finality to her discourse. "Now, let's go back to bed. Zinger and I have had scarcely fourteen hours; we're sleepy."

I sighed. Seemed like sound advice to me.

Love From the Mountains,

D.

NJJul27,A6/SH

## Mark your calendar now for a day at the Mountain Heritage Festival

The 10th annual Mountain Heritage Festival is September 3rd and 4th, from 10am - 5pm at the Mountain Life Museum, one block south of the Old Courthouse in Blairsville, Georgia. The activities are centered around the restored 1861 Payne family log cabin, the Mauney family barn, and other structures from Union County's past.

Hosted by the Union County Historical Society and sponsored by The United Community Bank, the festival celebrates the cultural heritage of the north Georgia mountains. The festival features

locally produced handcrafts, traditional foods, music, demonstrations of "old ways," and farm animals. Demonstrations like quilting, spinning, basket making, chair caning as well as hands-on activities like gold-panning make this a trip for all to enjoy.

Free and open to the public, the Mountain Heritage Festival is a unique event promising wholesome family fun and teachable moments for all ages. Call the Union County Historical Society at 706-745-5493 for additional information. View our web site at www.unioncountyhistory.org.

NTJul27,C3/ac

## Greenwood and Mandrell in concert in Franklin

The Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts will host an evening of unforgettable American music with superstars Lee Greenwood and Louise Mandrell on July 30 at 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$45.

Few artists have ever written a song that has become more a part of America's cultural landscape than Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA." If he'd never written or recorded another hit, Greenwood would have secured his place in music history with that powerful, inspiring ballad.

But it is only one of the many hits that have propelled Greenwood's successful career. With his distinctive voice, insightful songwriting and unparalleled showmanship, Greenwood has been captivating audiences for decades.

Along the way, he has won numerous accolades including two Male Vocalist of the Year awards from the Country Music Association and the CMA Song of the Year honor in 1985 for "God Bless the USA." He won the Top Male Vocal Performance

in 1983 for "I.O.U.," and his lengthy string of hits includes such classics as "Ring on Her Finger, Time on Her Hands," "It Turns Me Inside Out," "Somebody's Gonna Love You," "I Don't Mind the Thorns (If You're the Rose)" and "Dixie Road."

As proud as he is of "God Bless the USA," Greenwood is an artist who prefers to look forward, not back, and the artist has a new country album he hopes will appeal to a new generation of country music fans. Greenwood says, "[Music] is always something that brings me joy, and because I have joy in my heart for doing it, I spread the joy to other people."

Greenwood is accompanied by country music legend Louise Mandrell, an entertainer who exemplifies the word "multi-talented." A master of multiple instruments, including the drums, accordion, fiddle, and bass guitar, just to name a few, Louise Mandrell has been performing for nearly four decades and has made her mark in the entertainment

world by pouring her heart and energy into each and every endeavor.

Louise Mandrell has had an impressive career, working with the legendary Merle Haggard, as a back-up vocalist and as a performer on the weekly variety program, Barbara Mandrell and the Mandrell Sisters, showcasing not just Louise's singing abilities but her instrumental and comedic skills as well. Louise also released a string of top 10 hits including "I'm Not Through Loving You Yet," "Maybe My Baby," "Save Me," and "Too Hot To Sleep." Finally, she even opened her own signature theater in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, which immediately became one of the top attractions in the area and where Louise was responsible for staging the most attended show in Pigeon Forge throughout its eight-year run.

These two country music superstars, Lee Greenwood and Louise Mandrell, are sure to delight and inspire Smoky Mountain Center for the Performing Arts audiences. T(Jul27,F3)SH

## Butternut Creek Festival 2011

Photos by Norman Cooper



Photos by Frank Uhle



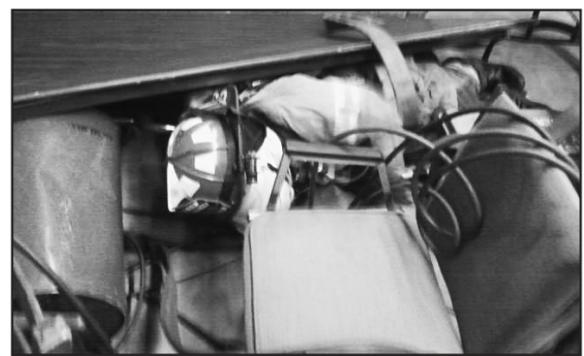
## Firefighter Entrapment training

These are words no firefighter wants to hear because it means one of our own is trapped in a burning building and a Mayday call has centered all efforts on making a rescue.

Recently firefighters at Towns County Station 2 were training on the proper way to give a Mayday call for help. This training evolution involved firefighters crawling through a maze of tables, chairs, wires and debris until they became trapped. First a Mayday call is given on their hand held radio, then an idea of where in the structure they are, the amount of air left in their tank, any injuries and then activate the pass device (personal alert safety system). This device gives off a high pitched sound and a strobe light, helping rescuers find the victim. If possible the firefighter will then try to become disentangled and escape.

This and other training evolutions are practiced on a regular basis by firefighters so that in critical moments all members know the proper method of response.

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday is the international call for help. This distress signal was originated in 1923 by Fredrick Stanley Mockford, a senior



Firefighting equipment

radio officer at Croyton Airport in London. He was asked to think of a word that would indicate distress and would be easily understood by all pilots and ground crew in an emergency. Mockford proposed

the word "Mayday" from the French m'aider meaning help. The word is always given three times to prevent mistaking it for some similar sounding phrase under noisy conditions. T(Jul27,K1)SH

## Clay County Patriots to meet

The meeting will begin with a bring a dish meal at 6 at the Clay County Senior Center on Ritter Road in Hayesville. Primary speakers will be Richard Botting who grew up in Argentina under the Perone dictatorship, and Nighta Davis. Richard will speak about the similarities of growing up under communist rule in Argentina and the present climate in America. Nighta Davis who

is the National founder of the non-partisan American USA Patriots groups will address current issues.

Everyone is invited no matter what your political choice. The Patriots are non-partisan and invite monthly speakers of all affiliations.

For further information contact the Clay County Director, Don Hunt at 706-994-4186. T(Jul27,H1)SH