



THE WEWA NEWS™

MARCH 2022 >> Vol. 4 No. 03-02 <<

A FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER Take One!

WEWAHITCHKA WOMEN'S CLUB SPONSORED A PUBLIC FORUM ON HUMAN TRAFFICING

by Tom Wynn

In the evening hours of February, the 22nd, Panama City Police Chief Talamantez (also a Marine Vet.) and Ms. Sula Skiles came to Wewa Elementary school to teach those that attended how to spot human trafficking in our own community. Also in attendance was the retired director of the Gulf County Domestic Violence Task Force, Pam Martin, who spoke on Teen Dating Violence and Family Violence.

City Commissioner Ralph Fisher, his wife Patty Fisher and I were in attendance. Members of the GFWC and the public asked questions and offered their own stories of "Stranger Danger" events in their lives.

Ms. Skiles shared her firsthand experiences as a victim of human sex trafficking and slavery, having been a sex slave for a Billionaire's girlfriend. After years of slavery, she managed to escape and went to the authorities.

Police Chief Talamantez and Ms. Skiles hopes are that we who live in the Panhandle be more watchful for human traffickers as they come into our area. Learn more about their operations, ways of tricking people into their system of slavery, so we can better protect ourselves and our loved ones.

(Story continues on page 10)

WEWA IS GRANTED 8.5 MILLION FOR SEWAGE SYSTEM UPGRADES

by Tom Wynn

The City of Wewa was approved for a grant of \$8.5 million for our sewage system upgrades and repair. Governor Ron DeSantis announced on February 11th that a \$91 million funding plan was ear marked for the Panhandle area, a much-needed grant to say the least! DeSantis said in the past that Hurricane Michael recovery would be a lengthy process and that he would help our communities become stronger and better equipped for the future. TW

THE WEWA HISTORICAL GROUP GOES DIGGING!

by Tom Wynn

The WHG with the guidance of fellow member Tom Godwin found parts of a crashed 1942 trainer-WWII war plane in the Wewa Area. Godwin has since asked the US Military for their records on the crash, so standby folks for more news coming in future issues of The Wewa News as more information comes available. Come to the meetings and learn more about the history of the Sweetest Little City in Florida. 6pm on the third Thursday of the month at the Corner Café'. Be there or be square! You are missing out!



WEWAHITCHKA HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS DO GOOD!

KAYLEE EASTER IS A BIG WINNER!

Congrats on your win girl! Kaylee wins the Regional-moving up to the State Wrestling Tourney.

KAMERON EASTER FINISHED IN FOURTH PLACE AT THE 100 POUNDS, just missing the bronze metal, Kameron is a 7th grader and will be someone to reckon with very soon. POWERFUL!

Great job Ladies! Wee Bee proud of you!



Off to Kissimmee you go!

TALKS ARE IN THE WORKS-THE DEVIL IS IN THE DETAILS

by Tom Wynn



Mr. Tommy Hamm's company (Winterfell Construction) did not complete the structure nor hand over the keys to the new fire house on the 26th of December (after you figure

all the rain days the city agreed to for extra time due to heavy rain) as agreed. The Bonding company lawyers, and our city lawyer are in discussions currently. Mayor Phillip Gaskin was asked to enter the talks as requested by the lawyers involved, meeting the 9th of March. "Standby to standby" as we use to say in USCG Aviation when a big case was in the works.

(Story continues page 2)

(Fire House-continues from page 1)

In the January city meeting, the city commissioners authorized the city lawyer to contact the bonding company of the contractor after the vote tallied. Before the vote, Mr. Hamm, the owner of Winterfell Construction company was given time to explain his reasons for the various concerns and delays the commission had issues with to the city council and the public.

He gave reasons why there was cracks in the floor, brick issues and roofing issues that concerned the city council. He continued with placing the blame on the city of Wewahitchka and its council for his delays, materials not arriving on time, change orders not signed by the council during an earlier special meeting by the city as well as other issues, i.e., one of his contractors passed away. He complained that Wewa had more rain than any other place he claimed, which he added to his reasons for not completing his contractual obligations to the city of Wewahitchka.

During the meeting Mayor Gaskin asked him directly if he was blaming the City of Wewa for his woes in completing the building as agreed. (The city of Wewa has yet to place an 80,000-pound Fire truck on the concrete slab, yet it has a crack in it and a void under the concrete, as per Mr. Jack Husband, the Engineer in charge of the project for the city of Wewa). Jack Husband is the city's representative on the project. The contract is clear-the City of Wewa is "The Owner" of the site, the land and the purse-strings for the Fire House. Mr. Tommy Hamm, during the meeting said he was "The Owner." The public and the Council all heard him say this.

I saw the sadness in the face of the Mayor Phillip Gaskin, when he heard Mr. Tommy Hamm say these things. He had no choice but to fire Winterfell Construction at that point, he told the city lawyer to terminate Mr. Hamm's company immediately.

The Contract clearly says that the City of Wewahitchka is "the Owner" several times in the contract and gives a deadline for the keys to be turned over to the City of a completed fire station as agreed by December 26, 2021(with the rain days considered in).

Due to the city complaints of noncompliance of the contract and other issues, and Mr. Hamm placing the blame squarely on the City Council (pointing a finger at Mr. Ralph Fisher personally, at the end of his presentation) as well as Mr. Jack Husband's

Engineering crew, saying that poor design was the reason for the cracks in the slab. All this gave good reason for the mayor as well as the entire Wewahitchka city council to agree that the quality of the fire house construction is subpar by Winterfell Construction. Thus, they voted to shut the project down and barred Winterfell Construction from the site, unless a city employee was present to recover their tools etc.

The fire station is now months behind in its completion date, to the point that the city clerk, Ms. Rachel Jackson must contact FEMA asking for more time to get the building completed. Just more paperwork for the city workers and more worry for "We the People" not having our fire station with its new equipment up and running (since the start of the project Wewa has had four house fires, all the people made it out safe, one dog passed away in one of the fires).

The council voted 3 to 0 to allow the Lift Stations Contracts to go ahead. Lift Stations 5 and 11 then 3 and 4 later.

The city council was informed by Chipper Wade that we only have one water pump in operation at this time. The mayor told Wade to buy a new well pump asap because he believed only having one water pump in operation was a major emergency to the city. Wade agreed and will order one at once.

The County Sheriff, Mike Harrison was consulted by the Council on how the Robo Cop Speed sign was doing on 2nd street. Several folks that live on 2nd street complained to the city council on how dangerous the traffic had become last month. All agreed that it was helping and requested it stay in place for another month.

Mr. Justin Suber requested the city workers help keep the ball fields in better condition during the off season, to make it easier for everyone to prep for the next season when it is time. The city agreed to get the inmate cleanup crews to keep the fields up during the off season. TW

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John 14:1

WEWAHITCHKA HISTORICAL GROUP NEWS

by Ann Johnson President of
Wewahitchka Historical Group News

Well, we had a wonderful time this month at the dig site near Whispering Pines. Tom Godwin with his best friend Stuart worked hard all the week before flagging at least a hundred places for us to dig. Not only that but they put in a lot of work on the computer researching and looking for information for the group dig.

We had quite a turn out, young and old, and I was so excited that Ms. Vera Rozier who had just turned 98 years old this month was able to come out and have some fun with us. She is remarkable and held up better than most of us!

We still have quite a bit left to do so we will schedule another day soon to return to the "dig site". I will keep you updated by email and when possible, in the Wewa News.

Also, we finished working the bricks for the Presbyterian Church, the foundation is finished, and the Church is in place. We cleaned over a thousand bricks making them useful again. Thanks to the local volunteers for their help.

We need some help with writing down any buildings, homes, structures or cemeteries older than 50 years old. There is a group, LG2, who will be coming in March for a week to document all the places for our town and in Gulf County proper. They will be pulling up the property appraisers records to get a lot of the info but as locals we know where there are a lot of things that may not be listed there.

I have listed some of the older homes I can think of and I put the bridge at the Dam and Dead Lakes, water tower and the boat landings that I can think of as structures. I know there are bound to be plenty of other things. He mentioned things like turpentine stills, old barn structures, moonshine stills (LOL), old bee aeries/houses, barns and other things that may not be on a property appraiser listing. Just jot down anything you have and give me the list at the meeting or email me what you have, please.

Also, the library is in need of 2 or 3 more of the little library boxes like the ones placed around town. They don't have to be exact but need to be weatherproof for the books. If you have any building skills and willing to donate building a box or two, I will check and see if

Fishers or Ace Hardware may have some scrap lumber, they will donate to the group. Hope to see everyone at the meeting!!

If anyone is interested in visiting or joining the Wewahitchka Historical Group, meetings are held every third Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM CST at the Corner Café. **AJ**

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Matthew 8:26

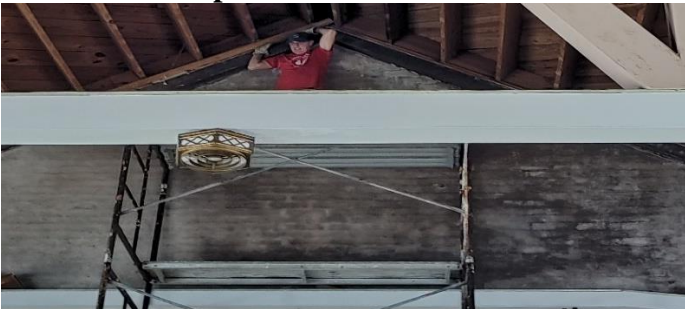
WEWA CHURCHES UNDER CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR by Tom Wynn



Wewa Presbyterian Church with new foundation



Wewa First Baptist Church- under construction



Pastor Brother Mike Stroud taking down the last boards at the top of the Sanctuary. (Photos by TW)

First Baptist Church and The Presbyterian Church are under repair and renovation. They are looking for local volunteers and donations to complete the repairs and renovations. Their pastors and members are thankful for the Lord's work and for their place of worship in the sweetest little city in Florida.

Wewa has approximately 24 Churches in the local area with just over two thousand people living in the city limits, not counting those that live just outside the city of Wewa proper who attend Church in our places of worship.

We love one another and have a good relationship with one another sharing in many ways with our local community and our missions. The local pastors meet often for lunch and visit with one another, as siblings in the Lord should. We are family and we act like it in Wewa. Thank you Wewa for that! Thank you, Pastors and Deacons, for your efforts and challenging work. We love you!!

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Psalm 119:89



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The Wewa News is a locally owned and operated newspaper, created solely for the enjoyment of the people who live in the Wewa area. Our purpose is to bring "Good News" and "Whatever" to our locals' attention. I hope to bring back some joy and fun into our lives again and bring us closer than ever before. Thank you to those that support our effort. TW



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENTS 2022
Wheels on Williams.....Third Thursday
April-May-June-July
Scallop Festival.....September 3-4, 2022
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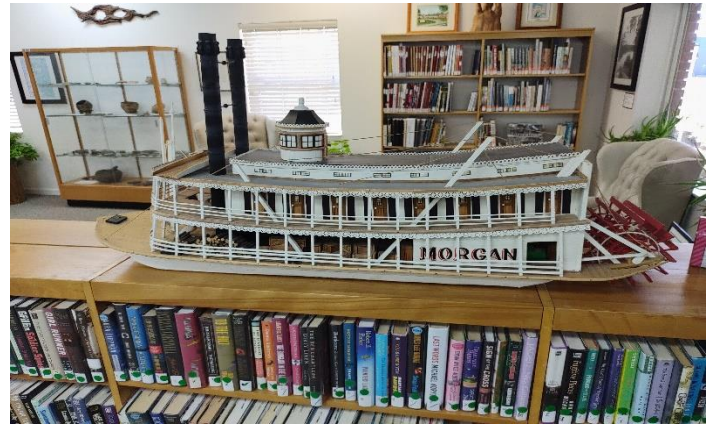
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THE MORGAN PADDLE BOAT Model Resides in Wewa Library

By Tom Wynn



For nearly a hundred years, from the 1830's to the 1920's, steamboats traveled the Chattahoochee, Apalachicola and the Flint Rivers.

They were bringing cotton from 19 different counties in Georgia, Alabama and Florida along with travelers down south to Iola, Wewahitchka, St. Joseph and Apalachicola, carrying people, barrels of nails, slaves, freemen, lumber, peanuts, various trade goods-including luxury goods imported from China and European nations-to individuals, stores, farmers, businessmen, plantations down river as well as back up the river.

Both Iola's (the old and new Iola's are both ghost towns today) and Wewahitchka were important river boat landings during this period in our history.



“THE WEWA NEWS” CELEBRATES ONE YEAR SERVICING OUR COMMUNITY WITH LOCAL NEWS!

by Tom Wynn

Thank you, supporters and readers of The Wewa News. Thank you for your love and support in our mission to bring “Good News” to the Wewa area.

We have been very blessed with strong support (notice the supporters’ ads in the paper), they are all helping us get the word out about Wewahitchka’s history, news and the love we have for one another and our little city.

It is costly to put out and publish The Wewa News monthly, so without your support with news and ads, it would be much harder to bring our paper into your businesses and homes. The Wewa News was invented by me 27 years ago, with just 2 supporting businesses, “Stacy’s Restaurant” and “The Pizza Kitchen” who helped bring the newspaper into existence with their first ad. I had my own little business, “Tom’s VCR Repair” as well (see the achieves online at: wewa.news on google or any other browser). I ran the Wewa News for a year, when the Brown family bought the Old Gulf County Breeze Newspaper (which was originally own by Gene Hanlon’s grandfather, Mr. Claud Hanlon, later bought by Ed Bandjough, who has passed away). So, I shut down The Wewa News and helped them for a few years.

We were an instant success with The Wewa News newspaper, and it soon grew from one page to sixteen plus pages with flyers in the middle of the paper. We only reported good news, leaving deaths, drug busts and other sad news to St. Joe “The Star” and Panama City “News Hearld.”

The point of The Wewa News has always been to report The Good News about the north end of Gulf County Florida. Our goal was to show the world that there is good news to report about Wewa, and we were not all about drug busts, and criminal conduct etc. It worked! Soon I was out reporting the local TV stations and the other local newspapers. The Folks of Wewa were calling me to tell their stories, I went to the city meetings and other events. I reported good news until my health was affected. Too much stress that doctor said. Time to help! Just in time, The Brown family came into take my place. A gift from the Most High! Just in time.

I was so happy for them and for Wewa. A good family and a good newspaper that would report good news about our loving people, and not just about the druggies and the dope heads.

So, what was yet another reason for the original Wewa News and this one today? Keeping our money local and enjoying what blessings we have here, now-today and tomorrow. Notice the good things! Look around, can you see the truth of the matter. We are very blessed! So, act like it, say it and share it!



“Bee Wewa Strong! Bee a Social Bee or Social Butterfly like Mee!”

Please visit and spend your money local as Wewa needs the business and the jobs that those businesses produce. For the love of our local family please spend your money local and visit our restaurants and stores often. Otherwise, spend your money in our own county, including Port St. Joe, Howard Creek, White City and at our beaches. Live here and spend here! Fish here, eat here, go to church here and most of all, live in peace here.” We are growing folks, so you better be happy you got here first.

We have the best people in this country living here. We know how to love one another, and we do so very often. Thank you for your support and effort to be godly people. “As I have always said about Wewa, “even the bad boys say, “Yes Sir! or No Sir!” in Wewa!”

We rarely have murders and major crimes here in Gulf County and we are very thankful for that. We are loving and kind natured, living together in peace and joy with deep friendships. That is why we live here. Whatever happens in this world, we must love one another, and help those in time of immediate need. Be thankful for your neighbors, your friends and family here. We are good people, remember that! Read The Wewa News often, it is going to make you smile!

Please read The Wewa News and share its content with family and friends. Enjoy life while we have the time. Live good and be of good cheer for the time may be short and our new era of government and society has come to a point of no return. So, make the best of it while we still have time to love one another, and do good things for each other as often as we are able. Tom Wynn – Publisher of the Wewa News. God Speed!

TW

HURRICANE MICHAEL CURSES, THEN COMES THE BLESSINGS- IN GRANTS AND PRAYERS!

by Tom Wynn

On the 10th of October 2018, Hurricane Michael destroyed our homes and businesses, but it did not destroy our spirit of love and forgiveness toward one another, in fact it increased our awareness of how important we are to each other, that includes the entire Gulf County community.

The Governor of Florida Ron DeSantis has approved a major grant for the Sweetest little City in Florida, to the tune of 8.5 million dollars to help repair and restore our sewage and water systems, which are in dire need of repair and replacement. Wewa has been fighting a losing battle with water mains breaking plumbing wearing out to our local residences home down in Blue Gator and other places. Flood waters have been overwhelming our pumping stations and on and on. Michael Gortman and his mighty crew have had to work in the cold, rain and mud to fix water pipes that decided to break directly under highway 71 just in front of the new Burger King, a few months ago, and on Church Street and other places around the city. This in order to keep the city in clean drinking water.

Rain or shine them guys work, and they work until the patch work is done. Then they call FEMA for an emergency grant to fix the road top. They, and the ladies at city hall work to write grants in their spare time (yea right! most likely during their lunch hour) to get these grants to make these repairs and replacements for dead and dying water pumps etc.

Today we are in dire need of a pump for our water system so Chipper Wade has to order yet another new pump to keep us with fresh deep well water for the city system. We are now down to one working pump today. Chipper Wade will do the mighty thing and come with repairs again and again, as he has done for the pass nearly 50 years.

I hear more grants are coming from the State, thanks to Michael Gortman and Ms. Rachel Jackson, our Super Woman
City Clerk.

The Mayor, Phillip Gaskin, and the City Commission keeps everyone on their toes, as the city can keep up with the broken systems, wore out pumps and so-forth.

We are in dire need of the entire Sewage system replacement (the BP Grant is supposed to pay for all of that, and it should take about 12 years to replace our entire system). When that will happen, its up to the BP Grant via the State of Florida, see last March and April Wewa News articles for information I researched last year).

We welcome newcomers and strangers showing them that we love more, give more and respect more. We are a foundational people, our roots are from the Pioneers that

first settled southern parts of Alabama, Georgia and North Florida, and those natives who taught our families how to live on the land and in the river areas. We are tough folks, yet we are very loving (just don't mess with our bees).

We come from deep roots, from living mountains of strong-willed people who came here to start a new life. Some of old and some new, but just the same, they came here to this part of Florida. They enjoyed life and lived in peace. In case you did not notice, many of us are retired US Military who have lived all over the world and know for sure, Wewa is the best America has to offer for a home of peace and joy.

Slow down and take in nature. See it, feel it and taste it. We are the future of and the past of, God's Country. We are what many in the world want and look to find. We are no longer the Forgotten Coast, we are no longer, little ole' Wewa or sleepy Gulf County. We must keep our peaceful and loving attitude folks, let not the world cause us to lose sight of our purpose in life, to love one another and help those in immediate need. They can keep their tribulations and their infighting to themselves, we know who we are and what we want in life.

We found home, we love it, so, relax, now here comes the blessings, as we watch the world fight for their freedom often, we have found it here, so let's keep it, shall we? You made it here and now, enjoy the fruit of your labors getting back to the natural world, the way it should be. Enjoying your friends, family and neighbors. Team Chipola does this daily, we love one another, and we love you too. Enjoy the fruits of your labor and the fruit trees of your friends and your own. If you do not have fruit trees, consider growing your own to share.

Can you see the joy of life as it is today, look pass the TV News, they are trying to make you worry. We must plan our own future and take care of our own here. If you will just look around. See those over there? Say hi! If you know them, talk to them.

Enjoy time with one another for tomorrow may not come for you. Do it now, while you still have breath. Hug each other, love one another, it is okay to say, "I love you". It just brought us closer together. Look for the blessings, don't forget who is in charge, folks! Love U! Be Wewa Strong!
TW

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by Joyelle Linton – The Wewa Librarian



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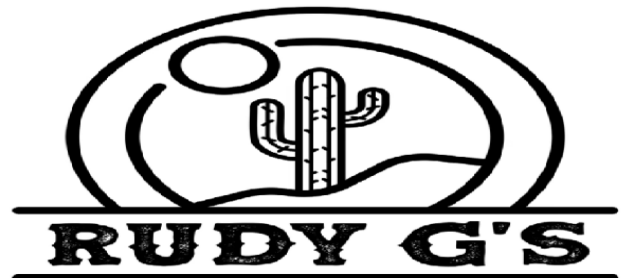


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(Human Trafficking story from page 1 continues)



Sheriff Mike Harrison, The Wewa Women's Club and our Guest Speakers-Chief Talamantez and Ms. Sula Skiles, put on smiles for The Wewa News after a heartbreaking hour of what people who have been victimized by human trafficking and sexual assault have gone through daily around the world. We need to be watchful of these victims. In many cases, the Chief said that those that knock on your door to sell you books and magazines are most likely victims of human trafficking.

Women will have a tough time looking into the eyes of men, after they deliver their speech for whatever they are selling. Also, they will rarely hold a conversation with anyone if they are not selling you something. They live in fear most of the time of their oppressors and slave owners.

Yes, folks this is in modern America and in fact all over the world today. It is unfortunate that slavery still exists in our modern world. Be watchful and tell someone if you think this is happening near you or are around you. Always watch your children carefully, even in the yard at play. **TW**

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BOLDLY COMPLETING THE FIVE-YEAR MISSION!

By Tom Wynn

Aaron Wynn, my youngest son took me on an adventure to a place I never heard of, nor ever dream existed. Just 3 miles north of the Florida-Georgia line near Jacksonville, is a place most folks didn't know existed either. BUT! The diehard Star Trek fans know about it, and now The Wewa News Readership will too. A place where **"Beam me up Scotty!"** is quite commonly spoken there. Those famous words can be heard in the original series that every Star Trek fan knows well. It has become an Idiom for our baby boomer generation.

Captain James T. Kirk and his mighty crew travel the stars on a 5-year mission (which ended only after 3 seasons). No worry, the Big Screen soon took over and now you know the rest of the story...Nope! They never finished the 5-year mission they started, now did they?

There was a young boy that remembered that, and soon he was able as a screen and voice actor to make it

happen for all of us, who wished they had finished that mission. Years later with the nod from key players in the Star Trek world to finish the series, in living color, **Vic Mignogna**, a screen and voice actor was to finish the series. His childhood idea came true, with hundreds of Star Trek Fans, a lot of money, time, and energy and made it happen.

He used a lot of his own funds and then raised additional monies with the help of some of the original series actors, other Star Trek series actors and many loving fans. **STAR TREK CONTINUES** built a replica of the original sound stage within 1 inch of its original design. Vic has put much sweat and money into the project, and that effort worked. It looks just like the original, because he was given the blueprints and design information from the original crew with the okay from CBS, they went to work, it happened, it was done!

Today they have a 18,500 -square-foot studio which now houses the most complete, to the inch, TOS sets in the entire world. It includes the bridge, corridors, crew quarters, sickbay, including the fancy beds with gold flake orange bedspreads (customed made for Vic by a modern factory), turbo-lifts, a full-size engine room, Jeffery tube, aux control room and, yes, the Transport station. All the walls can come apart so the camera crew can be placed for the best shots, and then put back together again, for the next take.

I was able to go when Vic was giving free tours in February, so I was treated like a King by the staff (who are also actors), learning lots of good stuff about the show, the actors and how things happened back in the 1960's. So, take a trip and see for yourself this amazing replica of one of our favorite TV shows that changed the world.

Vic with his acting crews and stagehands made 11 fan-produced web series of the original adventure, finishing the series 5-year mission. I bought the Blue Ray version while I was there. I watched the first one, and it was well done folks, so I look forward to the rest. LYN! Where is the popcorn?

The Studio is in Kingsland, Georgia Just 6 minutes off I-95 Exit 3 Kingsland-St. Marys

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Vic Mignogna, who played Captain Kirk... stands in the Transporter while he tells its secrets to us.



Vic talking about the rare material in Sickbay



(Above) The Jeffery Tube-it can hold the weight of the actors as they played their parts, amazing design and functionality. Can you see the steps in the middle? **STAR TREK CONTINUES** produced 11 full-length episodes with millions of views. They won several awards, and was applauded by moving picture professionals, film critics, and others for their work. Check out their website:

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