



# THE WEWA NEWS™



## THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY SPECIAL EDITION

JULY 2022 >> Vol. 4 No. 07-01 << A FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER Take One!

### BURGER KING OPENS

by Tom Wynn

On Friday at approximately 10:30 am, the new Burger King opened its doors to the public. Mr. Jim McKnight of Wewahitchka was customer number 1. Ms. Sherrie Walter, the Director of Operations for Burger King, Inc. was on hand for an interview with The Wewa News. She stood by to make sure everything went well. Mr. Carlos Sarmiento is now the manager of store.



June.

Ms. Walter confirmed that this is the most high-tech store in the world at this present time. It is the first of several that will be built in this area of Florida and elsewhere in the USA.

The Grand Opening (ribbon cutting by the Gulf County Chamber of Commerce) was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> of

time I had arrived. Mr. Michael Gortman was on the phone with me when he said he was heading to a local fire in Stone Mill Creek. Off we went! I followed one of the fire trucks to the location. No one was hurt! There was lots of joy to know that the fire was limited to the kitchen area, and no one was hurt. With temperatures around 101 degrees and being in the rural area of Gulf County; the number of trucks and volunteers was amazing. They are all heroes, and it showed the community that when one has a need, many come running! Job well done North Gulf County Volunteer Firemen!

### THE 4<sup>TH</sup> OF JULY CELEBRATION AT LAKE ALICE...COME SEE! By Tom Wynn

The annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks is a time of celebration and family reunion in the Wewa area. So, please make sure you find your way to Lake Alice in the evening time. Picnics and children at play will be a cause of family time. The celebration is in memory of our freedom from the British King in 1776 and self-rule for a new nation.

Much celebration of our freedom ring across our nation as We the People join hands and hearts to remember what our forefathers and families went through to give us what freedom we have today. Do your best to not lose that freedom by trickery, law, or war.

Please be kind and do not park on private property. Also, let's keep our park clean and use the trash bins available. See you there!

### FIRE BREAKS OUT IN A HOME IN STONEMILL CREEK

by Tom Wynn

A kitchen fire (caused by a corndog left on the stove, cooking in grease) was quickly put out by volunteer fireman Mr. Domino Demunck who lives and works very close to the residence. The fire occurred at the kitchen stove and moved up and behind the stove reaching the ceiling according to resident Mr. Pierce McGuire of 184 Quails Den Drive in the Stone Mill Creek area. He said that they were only gone from the house 10 minutes when the fire was discovered. Domino was first on scene, and the fire was quickly dealt with. Several fire trucks were on scene by the



Congratulations to Morgan Mayhann, Katie Shealy, Destiny Palmer and Kylie Parker (not pictured)  
(Story on page 2)

**(School girls recognized by district school board from page 1)** The young ladies obtained dual industry certification as an EKG technician and a phlebotomy technician. They were recognized Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup> at the Gulf District Schools Board meeting. These recent graduates were part of the Health Science program, taught by Lana Harrison, at Wewahitchka High School.

These careers have an average beginning salary around \$40,000. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment in healthcare occupations is projected to grow 16% in the next 10 years. This will add about 2.6 million new jobs to our workforce. This growth ensures that our students seeking careers in healthcare will have job security.

“The vocational certifications, afforded our students while they are still in high school, allow them to obtain jobs that can serve as life-long careers, or they can be used as a steppingstone to help them reach other career goals in healthcare. The fact that they are ready to get a good paying job, with benefits, straight out of high school without spending years in college, is a draw for many students,” said Lana Harrison. Mrs. Harrison is a certified teacher and Registered Nurse at Wewahitchka High School where she has taught for 17 years. She credits Debbie Baxley and Misty Wood for getting the wheels in motion years ago in order to get the health science program started and Lori Price for working tirelessly to keep it going.

A special thank you goes to Mrs. Tracy McGlon and HCA Florida Gulf Coast Hospital for partnering with WHS for the students to complete their required clinical experience.

## **WEWAHITCHKA CITY FIRE STATION NEWS**

by Tom Wynn

During the June city meeting, not one word was mentioned about the lawsuit between the City of Wewa and Mr. Hamm, the contractor who did not complete the new fire house project on time (by the 26<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 as agreed). The city is in a lawsuit with Mr. Hamm’s company. The latest word is that the lawsuit was dismissed by the judge, meanwhile, the city fire trucks, and equipment are temporarily parked in the city barns on 7<sup>th</sup> street, awaiting their new home. Ms. Michelle Jordan, the city lawyer, continues to work behind the scenes to get our fire station situation dealt with legally.



After last month’s business(in May), the floor was open to the public to address the city council. Tom Wynn told the city council of his research in finding a contractor that has built several fire stations in North

Florida. The contractor (Mr. Jason Alderman, the north Florida area leader of MADRID Engineering Group-CPWG) is interested in finishing the project for the city of Wewa. There has been no mention of any contact with Jason Alderman in last month’s meeting.

Since the contractor’s termination. No one is allowed to enter the building. So, it sits with no doors and unfinished construction and wooden walls exposed to moisture, etc. In an interview, the city lawyer said Wewa meeting with Mr. Hamm’s lawyers was canceled by the other party which was planned for 17<sup>th</sup> of June 2022.

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## **“FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY” MEMBER TOM SEMMES OFFICALLY INFORMS CITY COMMISSION**

by Tom Wynn

Mr. Tom Semmes informed the city commission that the “Friends of the Library” group has formed and has broken away from the Port St. Joe Library organization. Semmes discussed the organization’s goals and asked that the City of Wewa increase their yearly donations to the local City library (presently about \$2,250) in the future budgets. The Gulf County Commission earmarks \$100,000 per year for libraries via the 5-county library system, The Wewa Library rarely sees any of that money, which should be about half, since there are only two libraries in Gulf County. There will be further discussion in the future with the City on this matter.

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**HAPPY BIRTHDAY CHRIS WYNN**



## **CITY OF WEWA NOISE ORDINANCE 2022-1219L Second Reading!**

by Tom Wynn

The City Commission has been getting complaints about people blasting their car stereos as they park at local stores and in parking lots past 10 pm. The Sheriff said Gulf County Commission and City Commission needed a noise ordinance passed for him and his deputies to take action without them hearing the loud noise themselves. So, a local noise ordinance was created and has been read a second time this June meeting. Please, be respectful of others when in public!

### **CITY MEETING CEMETERIES NEWS**

The City Mayor agreed with the Wewahitchka Historical Society about getting the cemetery stones and roads repaired. Mrs. Ann Johnson, president of the W.H.S., told the council that pressure-washing the tombstones does damage to them. So, she told the council that the society was having a training meeting to learn how to thoroughly clean and restore the tombstones. Mayor Gaskin said he was unaware that pressure-washing would damage the stones, all agreed to wait until September to do any repairs. The mayor ordered the City Clerks to combine the cemetery funds as one account last meeting. If you have family buried in Jehu Cemetery and would like to donate for its repairs, contact Ms. Ann Johnson to give a check or money order. She will see that the funds will go toward the cemetery repairs.

The mayor made a visit to the Jehu Cemetery this past month to inspect its condition. During the June meeting, he talked about getting the trees removed and stones fixed or repaired around the gravesites. He spoke of how important it is, to many in Wewa that the Jehu Cemetery is properly taken care of.



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## **HONEY HOLE RESTAURANT OPENS SOON!**

by Tom Wynn



The newest restaurant in Wewa hopes to open this month. It promises to be serving our favorite delights, southern style foods like, STEAK! SEAFOOD! OYSTERS! SHRIMP! and so much more, according to Ms. Brenda Gail, the owner of the Restaurant. The restaurant has been in construction now for 3 years. They will serve fresh seafood (as they have their own boat), pizza, and other things that will draw the customers in. Donnie Arnold has worked extremely hard to make Brenda Gail's dream come true: a restaurant for everyone to enjoy.



Ms. Brenda Gail Arnold said they would be open from 4 am to 9 pm for breakfast, lunch and dinner. (CLOSED on Wednesdays) They are located on Hwy 22, just 1 mile west of the red light in the center

of Wewahitchka, or 1790 Hwy 22 for those using GPS. BE WATCHING FOR THEIR OPEN SIGN FOLKS!

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## **LIFT UP WEWA!**

And bring joy to someone today! Tell someone you love them, tell someone you care about them, tell someone you miss them. Lift our leaders up and pray for those that run our government. Be kind when others are not! Be joyful when you see your friends, for tomorrow they or you may be gone. Not to worry, He has your life in His hands. Remember who you are, LOOK UP in the night sky, say "Hello Father, I see you own everything!" Live at peace, all is according to His will. TW

## **ARE YOU IN NEED OF A MOW MAN?**

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## Senior Citizen Center update!

by Tom Wynn

Good News! The city has done a lot of repairs and improvements to the Senior Citizen Center over the past week in June. A new refrigerator has arrived, a new oven came in this week in a very large box, and a new microwave was donated to the Center. Ms. Jo Ellen Campbell during the June city meeting last week thanked the city council for the upgrades. Chipper Wade and David Paul (the New Parks and Rec Supervisor for the City) installed new door upgrades including dark gray paint, and locks.

Gulf County commission supplied their agreed share (half of \$2,500) of the expense. The oven is waiting to be installed. Thank you, city and county, for your efforts in the much-needed kitchen upgrades and repairs.

Mayor Gaskin asked about the various repairs of the Senior Citizen Center and the progress in which the city manager Mike Gortman and City work crew supervisor Chipper Wade, was coming along on those projects. They told the council of the repairs and upgrade that they had completed thus far. Gortman and Wade said they could not locate any roof leaks thus far. Everyone was pleased with the progress on the Building upgrades.

## TAUNTON FAMILY FESTIVAL 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FUN FOR ALL!

On June the 4<sup>th</sup> the Taunton Family Home had their



annual festival to raise money for the children's home. Fun was had by everyone. Many went swimming, played with the kids and just enjoyed one another's company.

Several got to hug and kiss as they saw each other across the property. So many of us old folks got to see many of the kids grow up and become productive adults over the years. So, loving and kind they became, having gotten married and now having their own children. Abby and the late David Taunton have done a wonderful thing in taking in children in need of a home and love. Well done, faithful servants of the Lord! Everyone took part in the food and goodies, as well as the BBQ and Chicken Salad sandwiches. Abby was interviewed by the Wewa News Editor Tom Wynn, The Star Newspaper Editor Wendy Weitzel, and a



young lady from Channel 7 news in Panama City. Mr. Charles and Betty Cleckley were there enjoying the festival with their grandson (pictured above).

TW

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## WEWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY IOLA CEMETERY GETS MARKER!

by Ann Johnson President of

Wewahitchka Historical Society News

Come one, come all that want to take part in learning about our local history. Come to our meetings on every third Thursday of the month at 6 pm, at the Corner Café in downtown Wewa. Mr. Tom Godwin made the sign with the help of his best friend Stuart Resmundo. The W.H.S. made a day trip out to the Iola Cemetery to mark the location for others to know where it is. This is just one of two in the area. The group was on hand to assist in the installation of the sign. Future projects will be conducted after we learn the rules and laws on working on local Florida cemeteries.







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## Ms. Wendy Weitzel of The Star Newspaper A STAR GETS BRIGHTER!

by Tom Wynn

Pictured above is the new editor of "The Star" Newspaper in Port St. Joe Florida. She has been reporting on The Wewahitchka Historical Society outing at The Old Stone Mill Grist Mill in north Gulf County as well as many other stories locally. Wendy received a promotion in June as the official new "News Editor" of The Star Newspaper, a well-deserved promotion.

Ms. Weitzel came to Gulf County sometime back in August of 2021 from Texas. In a brief time, she has made friends with the editor and publisher of The Wewa News, Tom Wynn as well as others locally. Ms. Weitzel has quickly become a bright new star in journalism for local news up and down the Gulf County highways and byways.

"The Star" newspaper in Port St. Joe Florida is quickly becoming a must-read newspaper again. Ms. Weitzel started out as their digital editor for the company. Everyone at once took a liking to her smile and kindhearted approach to local news and events. She found her way into the hearts of everyone in the county, businesses and locals both enjoy talking to her.

She soon found her way to Wewa and other local areas, coming to meetings and shaking the hands of anyone that would give her a minute of their time. Her demeanor being sweet and very professional. Today Ms. Weitzel has a new assignment. She was truly promoted to Editor of "The Star" officially. Congratulations, Ms. Weitzel! May we continue to work together to bring the local news to our county, cities, as well as the small communities in Gulf County. We are proud of you!

JOHN 1:29

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### ***DR. JAMIE LESTER GOES TO CITY MEETING!***

by Tom Wynn

During the June city meeting Dr. Jamie Lester approached the city about 9 legal notices of a new city ordinance that took effect a few months ago. Dr. Lester told the city council that he had been following all 9 notices. The notices required him to complete all 9 properties in 20 days or he would be turned into the Gulf County magistrate office for violations of the ordinance. The document he received in the mail said it was coming from the county. He has been in contact with the Code enforcement inspector Mr. Tim Williams from the county, who was sent on the behalf of the City of Wewa. By voice and by text he has been in contact with the inspector, yet the county inspector turned all 9 notices into the magistrate at once, even after Lester told him that he was following the notices and had completed 2 or 3 of the properties as required by ordinance.

Each notice gave him 20 days to complete each of the noticed properties all at once, that is to finish all 9 properties in 20 days' time (which was highly unreasonable). After explaining how the County conducted themselves in this matter, the City Council granted him 90 days to complete the cleanup. Councilmen Ralph Fisher saw the mis- management of the case. Tom Wynn about fussed with the Council about this issue of allowing the County to be included in the enforcement of a city ordinance of this nature. Councilmen Fisher told the mayor he wanted a have a workshop to work out new guidelines for the county inspector to use when dealing with Wewahitchkaians on such notices. Councilmen Fisher stated that the City Council was "blind-sided" on this matter.

The Mayor and the Council agreed to do a workshop and have a better control over the County Code

Inspector on this matter. The City used the same wording on their ordinance as did Gulf County, Michael Gortman, the city manager said. The city commission was taken by surprise of the mistreatment of Dr. Lester when he cited that all 9 notices to clean up his properties along Jehu Cemetery Road were turned into the County magistrate office, after he had been compliant on all 9 properties, and in continued contact with the inspector to continue the clean ups.

Meanwhile, Dr. Lester told the Wewa News during an interview at least two septic tanks were damaged in the hurried clean-up process as well as other water pipe damages that would not have happened if they were not so rushed. No list of what the city required to be done was ever offered to Lester, either.

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The Gulf County Breeze C. F. Hanlon Editor; Owner  
June 30, 1950 5¢ per copy Submitted by Tom Semmes  
**Open Government?**

It is consensus among the economists in that trouble lies ahead unless governments high- handed spending is not stopped, and they agree that the time is not as far off as it has been when the show-down will come. For be it taken into consideration that in 1939, a \$1.00 purchase, will cost \$1.70 in 1950. The same 1939 \$1.00 purchase will cost you \$20.23 in 2022. Office holders must be elected who believe in the fundamentals our founding fathers established our form of government upon, and who passionately believe in Thomas Jefferson's great utterance that "The best governed people are the least governed people."

The citizens must vote at elections. They must roll up such majorities at the polls as to convince those elected that the people are hiring them as servants to manage public affairs as the public demands and not as electing them because they are fine men with the usual hail-fellow-well-met attribute. Citizens must take more interest in their government (which means electing the right type of officeholders) through their guaranteed right of choice at the polls or we continue our high rate of government spending – the highest rate the world has ever known. Our Democratic system of government ensures that the citizens have the right to be well informed as to know how their government operates and have the opportunity voice their concerns before those elected, without limiting the citizens time to voice their opinions.

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This photo is courtesy of the Wewa public library. A photo of the grand entrance on what appears to be the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. A historical photo treasure. The Gulf County Court House found in downtown Wewahatcha Florida. This photo is dedicated here in the Wewa News to our last 4 County Judges: The Late Judge David Taunton, The Late Judge Robert Moore, Retired Judge Fred Witten and the present county Judge, Judge Timothy McFarland who was appointed by Governor Crist in October 2010, and voted in 2012.

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**THE WEWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS**  
 by Diane Semmes



We met on June 16, 2022:



Members discussed holding a town hall meeting to inform residents of Gulf County about some of the projects our group will be taking part in. The main topic of discussion will be what can be done to save the old courthouse and what could the space in the building be used for. At this time, the plans are to hold the meeting on a date when all the County Commissioners can come and answer our questions and concerns. Watch for date, via Facebook or other ways we communicate in our

community. Location will be at the Honeyville Community Center located behind the park. If there's a change to this, the community will be informed. Everyone is invited.

James Rish stated he would like to have anyone who has a history of the old Iola Post Office to come and speak to our group. If you know of someone or if anyone has any historical details about the Post Office, we will welcome you to come and speak to us.

Earlier this month a group of our members went out to Iola and placed a marker near the site of the old post office. Thanks very much to Tom Godwin and Stuart Resmondo for making the marker and putting it up.

Another field trip was made by some members to Stonemill Creek to Domino Demunck's home to see where the old grist mill had been as well as some other sites of interest. After leaving Domino's everyone went to Blountstown to eat at Parramore's. Our next meeting will be held on Thursday, July 21, 2022, at 6:00 PM local time at the Corner Café. Everyone is invited to attend.

We had our one-year anniversary cake after the meeting. It was delicious! Tom Wynn bought the first of the new Afghan with new photos on it. They cost \$45.00 each. Contact Ann Johnson for details on buying one.



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HEBREWS 9: 13-15

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**Section 9. Due Process-**no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or **Property** without due process of law, or be twice put in jeopardy for the same offense or be compelled in any criminal matter to be a witness against oneself. **TW**

# SUBWAY

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## Wewa's Secret Savior

by Nichole Kuhne

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of June around 11pm, Wewa's Secret Savior, saved a local woman Nicolette Hamm home that she lives in with five dogs from a fire. Mr. Jonathan Kuhne, a local young man, gave his neighbor Nicolette a ride home.

Upon arrival Jonathan and Nicolette noticed smoke barreling out of the front door of the house. Jonathan at once rushed into the burning house without hesitation. The fire was contained in the bathroom. He got all five dogs out of the burning house and extinguished the fire before our local fire department arrived. Jonathan sustained third degree burns to his hands, legs, and feet along with smoke inhalation.

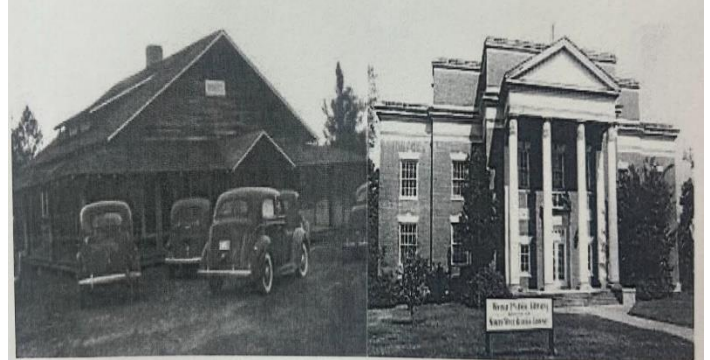
Nicolette has said, "I am truly grateful for Jonathan. He saved us all. I still have a home and my dogs are all ok, I can't thank him enough and the dogs love him."

The fire was started by a mentally ill ex-boyfriend who had entered the home without permission. He set fire to the bed that he moved into the bathroom. The perpetrator was under the influence of drugs and has severe mental health issues. He was detained by the Gulf County sheriff's department and charged accordingly. **NK**

## THE WEWA LIBRARY

### History of the Wewahitchka Library

by Joyelle Linton



Wewahitchka Library location in the Community Building in the late 1930s and the Courthouse in 1964



During the late 1930's, Wewahitchka had its first library located in the community building. (See top photos, left side) Unfortunately, a fire destroyed the building in the early 1940's, including all the books held inside. Some 20 years later, the Wewahitchka Woman's Club president, Mrs. Irene B. Britt, started a community improvement program to supply free library services to this small community. Due to a one mill tax over the entire County, the Wewahitchka Woman's Club had to include all of Gulf County in their plan. On September 22, 1964, a motion to build a new library was approved. The Gulf County Library Board, consisting of five members, was commissioned by Governor Ferris Bryant in October of 1964.

Wewahitchka Library opened its doors, located in the Gulf County Courthouse, on October 15, 1964. In addition to the Wewahitchka Library, a building was acquired for the Port St. Joe location. A bookmobile was also ordered. Both libraries joined the Northwest Regional Library System.

Within two months from the time the one mill tax was levied, the Gulf County libraries were receiving both State and Federal grants as provided by the Library Services Act. Librarians were at work at both locations, books were on the shelves, and the bookmobile was traveling the County.

After joining the Northwest Regional Library system, Kathleen Britt was hired as the first librarian, followed by Zora Bell Holly and then Ann Matlock. Dorothy Griffin was later hired as the first library assistant to Ann Matlock.



Marlene (Whitfield) McNair, her husband Alan, and many others began plans in the year of 2000 to open a new library across the street from the former Gulf County Courthouse. By January 2003, the Wewahitchka Library was once again open to the community in a brand-new brick building. The library was named after Charles Whitehead, the largest financial contributor to the library.

After 31 years of service, Ann Matlock retired in 2007. Beulah Harrison then became the Branch Manager, and she remained in the position until 2020. Joyelle Linton is the current Branch Manager today.

Happy Summer from the Wewahitchka Public Library! Our Summer reading program may be over, but we still have plenty of summer activities at the library! For children: Full STEAM Ahead **Friday July 15 at 3:30 CT** Grades 1-5. Come play with our new STEAM kits and learn with us! A School of Fish Tales (Family Program) **Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 CT** Professional Storyteller, Pat Nease, will present her summer program *A School of Fish Tales*. There's something fishy about these stories, but for shore they serve a porpoise. SpongeBob Out of Water family movie **Friday July 22 at 3:00 CT** Join us as we celebrate summer with popcorn and a movie. All Ages: Chess Club **Friday July 8 at 3:30 CT** and **Thursday July 28 at 3:30 CT** All levels of experience and ages are welcome. Chess board supplied or you may bring your own. Adults: Book Club **July 11 at 2:00 CT** *Flight Patterns* by Karen White. Wooden Clothespin Trivet **Monday August 1 at 3:30 CT** Bring a friend and make a wooden clothespin trivet for your cup of coffee or sweet tea.

The Wewa Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9-5 CT. Please contact us at (850) 639-2419 for additional information. JL

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### **BOOK REVIEW**

#### **"NO GRID SURVIVAL PROJECTS"**

WOW! This book is a true helper when it comes to prepping. "How to produce everything you need of your property" is its motto. It is chalk full of things to get. It even gives us the tools and other thing to be ready for any troubles in the future. It is wonderful for the DIY projects you can do. It covers so many subjects that you can do for yourself or order online. It is just an amazing book. It does not seem to leave any subject matter left behind to learn about or prepare for. Have fun with this book, folks. A how-to book that everyone should have on hand, for sure! This would make for a great gift to a friend or family member, they will love you for it. The book is available on Amazon.com

TW

## **St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church**



**St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church  
4060 N. Hwy 71 Wewahitchka, FL**

Services 10 am (CT) Sunday, lunch follows.  
except 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday – 12 noon, lunch at 11 am.

see <http://mukappa.net/sjbec> for full schedule

**John 8:34-36**

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**How many times did Jesus himself raise someone from the dead?**

# THE WEWA NEWS

**From September 1995 to December 1996 and**

**March 2021 to present...**

**Questions by a domiciled member of Gulf County Florida, Senior Chief Tom Wynn USCG Ret., Editor and Publisher of The Wewa News**

A bit of history The Wewa News, a small newspaper locally-owned and ran by Senior Chief Tom Wynn, a retired USCG Search and Rescue Aircrewman for over 20 years. The original newspaper was produced for about 1 year in the Gulf County area in 1995 to 1996. It started out as satire with one side of an 8 x11 sheet of paper, and sponsored by Mr. Howie Smith and Mr. Don Beatty, who were friends and owned local businesses, as did I, an Electronic/VCR repair shop.

They said they would sponsor the newspaper if I would continue to produce it. So, it became what it is then and again today. I designed it from the start to be different from other newspapers: **to be a free, good news newspaper with its mainstream thought of "Family-Community-God and Country" in its nature as well as to promote local businesses in Wewa and in Gulf County, with sponsored ads and articles, whenever possible.**

It was an extraordinarily successful newspaper, but over time as it grew and grew, it proved to be too much for one man. About the time I was being pressured to put out two papers per month, a local family bought out the old newspaper (the owner had passed away three years prior) called the **Gulf County Breeze**.

So, I decided to close The Wewa News and help the much older newspaper make a fresh start. Mr. Gene Hanlon's Grandfather, Mr. C. Hanlon, had started the Gulf County Breeze back in 1925, who years later sold to Mr. Ed Bandjough, a retired USAF officer, he ran the Breeze until his death.

I asked the owners of the new Breeze to keep my hometown flavor in their newspaper, which would make it an instant success. The Brown family ran a fine newspaper for about 5 years, and then they sold it off to Judge David Taunton. It was then sold to Mr. Jamie Lester, who is the present owner of the Breeze newspaper today, which is not active at this time.

I wrote several articles per issue for the Breeze for one year at no charge. Then I wrote two to three per month after that for the next year and a half before the Breeze traded hands once again. March of 2021, I decided Wewa needed The Wewa News again, the north end of Gulf County was being left out of the loop in news.

**TW**



# OP-ED

By Tom Wynn-Editor

Gulf County is an incredibly beautiful part of North Florida, it is the foundation stone of Florida. Yet the north end, with its beautiful old court house being left for dead, for 10 years now, the city streets of Wewa in great need of repairs (the city made an agreement with the county to fix and make repairs in trade for millions of dollars in gas tax revenue in a 25 year contract), sewage systems and water systems showing their age, with the small city workforce having to do repairs on the fly, in the heat, rain or cold more and more. We and they need a new system sooner then later.

I asked the Mayor in the March 2021 city meeting with a grand total of the local citizenry of myself, Mr. Chuck Johnson and Mr. Nathan Rish were present. I asked the City Commission where was the millions of dollars Wewa should get from the BP oil spill money fund? His answer is what caused me to start-up The Wewa News again. "I would Like to know too Tom!" Mayor Gaskin answered. So now you know the rest of the story! So in the next two issues I wrote the answer to my own question and the Mayors, after researching the question with the County Clerk, Ms. Becky Norris, she was very helpful and got what I need to do my research. I read well over 500 pages of documents and put together about 20 pages that only concerned Wewa, then presented the answer to the Mayor and the City Commission as well as wrote an article in the Wewa News (see April and May issues 2021 online google: [wewa.news](http://wewa.news)).

The Wewa News is totally free on-line today and in paper form because I take no salary from it, articles from others are written free and most of the ads are local business sponsors who love our efforts to bring the truth of the matter to "We The People" of Wewahitchka.

I am not about hurting our beautiful city or its governing body, but **"TEAM CHIPOLA"©™** and other local organizations like **The Wewahitchka Historical Society (W.H.S.)** and **"The Friends of the Library"**, as well as individuals who want some major changes when it comes to The old Court House restoration, the city streets lack of repair by the Gulf County Commission, the Gulf County Admin's lack of a proper response to questions and concerns for the north end of the county. The city government can only ask so much, call so much or ask repeatedly, for the county to honor their agreements with the City of Wewa.

There is no doubt in this man's mind that our City Commission does love every inch of this beautiful little city and its people. Many times, I have seen personally those folks help the locals when in need, or give variance when needed, or extra time, just for the asking. Many times, the Commission or City Manager works to help folks out, to

make it work for both the citizen/resident and the city, a win-win situation.

Our city is not a normal machine that mows down its citizens or residents whenever it so desires. Our Commission listens to the public and is open to ideas that will help make things better, cheaper or adjusted without spending money wastefully. Wewa is in very good shape and has a particularly good and honorable board, I know for sure, I have known them personally for years, and use their businesses often instead of traveling out of the city to PC or Port St. Joe (please forgive me Wewa, I love Reid Ave., it is fun and interesting to go down and talk to our own folks that work down there).

Let us be clear here, I am not a politician and have no desire to be one, ever! Just a family-oriented person who served his country saving lives for a living and now enjoying the fruits of my labor in my old age. Wewa has made that possible, for 30 years and that includes its loving government, with its low taxes, beautifully kept parks and lakes, and of course, good government who listens to the citizenship and residents.

This is where you will find the truth of the matter, it is living, it is free, it is moving and we enjoy the fruits of our forefather's labor, as it was laid out on paper and with their own shed blood backing up their signatures: "We The People" are here and we enjoy our God given rights to self-rule and to work together to be a better city and family, with love and respect for one another. We honor our Nation, its Flag, and for sure, its Veterans and active-duty personnel. Hands Down! We have good government here, we know them personally, we see them often as they all run their own businesses locally. Those that serve us in the city, are local members that we all know well. They are family, they are friends and even love one another.

I personally know them each for at least half my life or most of their lives, watched them grow up to be good folks, respectful and caring.

It is sad for me to report, that our county gov't officials who is our thorn in our side, not the employees that work in the offices day to day, they too are wonderful and helpful and loving, they are the best I have ever seen and I have lived and worked across this nation half my life, from South to North to East to West, in my service in the USCG and as a USCG dependent child and teen.

The County Commission is slow to move, slow to answer our concerns, when questions, you can never get a good answer, of what is happening in our neighborhoods (this of course has never happened to me personally, I assure you, nothing but respect, and I can get answers when pressed, but that is not the case with many others from the north end of the county, when they represent themselves or groups).

I have seen and heard this from others who try to ask questions in county meetings, and they are mocked, laughed at county employees, or they are shut down for lack of time remaining. Just watch the videos on-line to see for yourself.

They get no answers, no response, or are told they will have to pay for this or for that just to get an answer to the question or questions. "Sorry about your luck Joe Citizen", they seem to imply. Everything seems to fall on deaf ears. They simply move on and do as they please.

As Mayor Phillip Gaskin loudly said in our last city meeting, we need a change of County government, and he said he wants the old courthouse restored as well, during the June Meeting it's on the record folks!

Ms. Jodi Rustin, Ms. Ann Johnson, and so many others have been very kind in working behind the scenes to get someone to listen to them and to all of us. There has been no fruit there either. Even the respected retired Judge Fred Witten has tried to get movement from the Deep South, as well, No movement there, none whatsoever!

CWO Tom Semmes Ret. US Army, who spent most of his career serving in the Vietnam War and in the White House; nothing! Mr. Billy Traylor, who served both as Mayor of Wewa and County Commissioner for years; nothing! Both Tom and Billy are now running for District 2 County Commissioner seat, as well as Mr. Ward McDaniel, for re-election, and Mr. Michael Riley. Many folks have tried and tried to get information and MOVE THE COUNTY and to the County Commissioners' shame, nothing works!

So, we will see if 250 + signatures from all over the County, (just to start) will move them, and hundreds of votes this election may move the County to fix what is broken north of the White City bridge (Gulf County will see \$100 million dollars from the State of Florida soon. Billy Traylor said in the June Wewahatchka Historical Society meeting, there is already talk that the County has no plans to spend any of that money north of the White City bridge, folks.

We see lots of repairs and new things being put in place down South and on the beaches, and thank the Lord for that, as it is much needed, but the foundation of Gulf County has been neglected by the County Seat and others, as we do not seem to matter to them. Do we not give enough taxes to them? Do we have no pull with them? Is it because we only have two County Commissioner votes on the board? Are we just a sleepy hollow to them to visit occasionally when they want to go fishing? We will see! This upcoming election cycle, the old and tired, as well as the young folks, have awakened from their easy chairs and video games. Please vote folks, It is your right and privilege to have a say, in hand and in person. There is

serious talk in the North end (I am hearing more and more in my travels up and down Gulf County) of those that live North of the White City bridge of divorcing Gulf County and requesting the State of Florida to form a new county, which we will wish to call, "TUPELO COUNTY" and rule ourselves, since we can not get answers from those down South that were not voted in, or were voted in and have no proper answers, as if they are holding to various individuals.

I know it is hard to run a government, as I was in the government for over 20 years, I have an idea of how budgets work and what is important to the mission. Government organizations or entities must have individuals who work for them to give an oath of office and be bonded to work for the government of these United States of America. They can be held accountable. Most do a great job and love their county, city and for sure, this country. No bones about that!

Everyone is fed-up with those who talk a good talk but do nothing down in the County seat. Wewa is, frankly, wore out with Hurricane Michael PTSD, poor service by the county administration in the North end of the County, and on and on. We will vote accordingly in the coming elections, if necessary for a change! Their lack of interest could cost them an election, or their soft chair paid for by the citizenry of Gulf County proper. Be of good cheer folks, as we are growing in number in the North end of Gulf County Florida.

"We The People" are having a Town Meeting soon with the County Commissioners in Wewa or Honeyville, and the entire City of Wewa Commission voted 5-0 to be there as well, to ask questions and help the citizenry to get some answers to our concerns folks. They have our backs, so you need to be there so, you too, can ask questions and get some truthful answers from our county leaders. Please be respectful and loving, as these folks are our family and friends who have given their time and energy to our people in the form of government as it was laid out by our US Constitution and our Florida Constitution. So, be nice and polite to one another. The County Sheriff Mike Harrison will be on hand as he is at the monthly Wewa City Council meetings as well. **TW**

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### NOTICE

**The Presbyterian Church in Wewahatchka has three instruments that perhaps someone can use: > Mathushek Upright Piano (Needs tuning and work) > Kimball Entertainer Organ > Hammon Organ - needs work. James Rish can be contacted to pick up these items. 850-639-3645.**

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**JAMES 1:5**



## THE HISTORY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN WEWAHITCHKA, FLORIDA



The spirit of ecumenism was strong in territorial Florida. Many congregations commonly shared the one building. And it was not unusual for them to meet for worship in the larger homes. When circuit preachers came into a community, they conducted services for all. It was typical for these pioneer preachers to hold services on any day or night as they traveled the trails over land, or by steamboat and bateau through the waterways of old Florida. Early Florida history shows that the threat from storms, the native population, and disease caused settlers to ignore doctrinal differences as they banded together in the name of our Lord, seeking strength and solace. It is reasonable to think that religious life in Wewahitchka was no exception to the customs of the times. One thing that we do know is that St. John's congregation met for services in the Methodist Church from April 12, 1893, until the construction of their own building in 1903.

In the pioneer days, Florida Episcopalians were in a missionary status. In 1835, under Bishop Alexander V. Griswold, seven Episcopal churches became the first to be chartered by the Territorial Legislature of Florida. They formed the Episcopal Diocese of Florida. These churches were in Pensacola, Port St. Joe, Apalachicola, Tallahassee, Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Key West. Later, in 1851, Francis H. Rutledge became the first bishop of Florida. Shortly after his ordination the Episcopal Church in Marianna was chartered.

This church, along with the ones in Apalachicola and Port St. Joe were to have an important influence on the early history of St. John's Church. The old St. John's Church is one of the few buildings of its kind that has remained intact without any serious structural alterations. It was built in what has been coined the "Florida Gothic" style. At the end of the nineteenth century, this architectural pattern was commonly used for wood-framed Episcopal Churches. Many of the other churches from that period have been altered to fit modern needs. More often than not, they were demolished and replaced by modern structures.

Dr. John Keys, at the end of the nineteenth century, was a prominent figure in Wewahitchka. It was Dr. Keys who hired Mr. Francis Rummel, an immigrant carpenter from Bohemia to construct St. John's Church building. The building was completed shortly after Mr. Rummel's move from Augusta Georgia to Wewahitchka. The Rt. Rev. Edwin G. Weed, third Bishop of Florida, traveled from Jacksonville, around the southern tip of Florida to Apalachicola on a sloop, and then by steamboat to Wewahitchka. After his arrival, he consecrated the new building on November 26, 1903.

This interesting old building has survived three catastrophic events. It was struck by lightning in the thirties, an arson attempt was made in the forties, and a car accident, caused minor damage in the sixties. The major external changes have been the removal of the steps and door leading into the bell tower, and the replacement of the windows. In 1998 a new steeple with a cross was added to the bell tower, replacing the one that was lost in a hurricane.

No known record of the names of clergy serving St. John's before 1894 exists. But from that date until 1931 their names were: E. Chrysostom Burr, 1894; S. P. Waters, 1895-96; C.L. Pindar, M.D., 1897-99; J.P. Lytton, 1900-01; J.U. Graf, 1902; J.H. Dave, 1903-04; Thomas J. Purdue, 1905-18; George C. Benedict, 1919-29; Francis B. Wakefield, Jr. 1930. From 1931 until 1942 clergy from St. Luke's in Marianna served St. John's. They were Gladstone Rogers, 1931-35; and Valentine G. Lowery, 1939-42. No clergy are listed in the interim of 1936-38.

No records of any activity exist from 1942 until 1950. In 1954, clergy who served who conducted regular services at St. John's were Harry Bell Douglas, 1954; Thomas Miller, 1955-56; Gardener Underhill, 1957-60; Harry Babbitt, 1960-64; Henry D. Hoyt, 1965-70; J. Wardlow, 1971; and Sidney G. Ellis, 1972-83. From January 1, 1984, to December 31, 2000, Jerry R. Huft served St. James' Church in Port St. Joe, and St. John's Church in Wewahitchka. Father Huft retired on Jan. 1, 2001, from his duties at St. James' Church. But he continues to the date of this writing as the vicar emeritus of St. John's Church.

The old building was bought by the Presbyterians in 1943 because the younger people in the congregation had moved to Panama City to work in the war industry were overseas in the military. The sale price according to records in deed book #5, page 341, in the Courthouse was \$10.00. The communion silver and some other valuables were stored in the old courthouse vault until they were retrieved in 1952 by Mrs. Rosenia Kilbourn.

In 1938 the altar, made by the Apalachicola Cypress Company in 1903, was removed to St. James' Church in

Port St. Joe, where it was used until the new St. James' building was completed. It was then placed in Coldewey Hall at St. James' Church. In January 2005 it was returned to Wewahitchka where it was restored for use in the new St. John's Church.

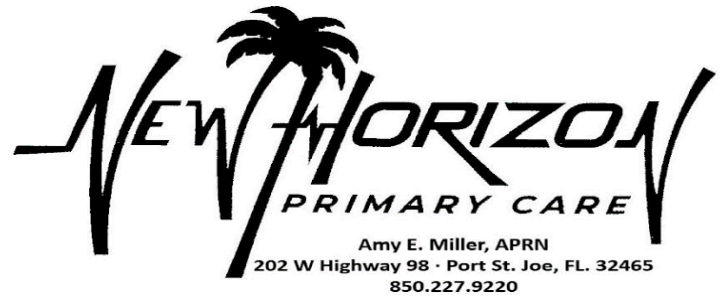
The Presbyterians transformed the apse of the old building where the altar had been into a choir loft with a communion table made by Mr. Max Kilbourn. Stained glass windows, carpeting, and central heat and air have been added. But the interior still has its original "Episcopal" appearance. The Presbyterians graciously allowed St. John's congregation to rent their building after the mission was reorganized. This proved to be a blessing for both congregations. The communicants who signed the petition for reorganization of the congregation in 1950 were: Mrs. Pearl Clark, Mrs. Alma Parker, Mr. Max Kilbourn, Mrs. Rosenia Kilbourn, Max's mother Mrs. Celia Kilbourn, Mrs. Barbara Shirley, Capt. Charles Brunner, Mrs. Roberta Harden, and Mr. Durward Owens, Sr.

The building owes its preservation to the Presbyterians, and the financial backing of Max Kilbourn. However, St. John's congregation owes its continued existence to the faith and tenacity of the members who reorganized the congregation. On January 2, 1955, the Rev. Thomas Miller and seven others met in the church for the first official meeting of the reorganized mission. Up until that time, unrecorded services were conducted in the Kilbourn home.

Since 1955, the congregation has had its difficulties. In 2003 there were about 40 individuals who identified St. John's as their church home. This growth, which is surely pleasing in the eyes of God, presented the congregation with a challenge: the facilities were no longer adequate for the ministries that are expected of a contemporary Episcopal Church. The leaders produced a five-year plan that was designed to lead the church into a progressive future. The congregation made a major step forward when D. L. "Bobo" and Betty Ann Owens donated five acres of prime land on Highway 71, about four miles north of the original location (in the center of Wewa).

St. John's congregation made a bold step of faith by imitating their forbears. The twenty-first century congregation now supplies a modern place for future generations to worship our Lord. Symbolic of this step was the groundbreaking ceremony on Saturday, November 22, 2003, and the Centennial Celebration Eucharist the following day. Both were presided over by The Rt. Rev. Philip M. Duncan, II. The congregation had a festive celebration on August 28, 2005; when Bishop Duncan returned to consecrate the first building on the new St. John's campus.

**JH**



## Keepers of the Old Ways: Survival-Self Sufficiency

by Jessica Braswell

We all understand Hurricane Season is among us. The problem is we can become complacent because we have lived here all our lives. Being prepared doesn't mean just for Hurricane Season, but for those times when life throws you a curve ball, like when you lose your job and you can't pay the light bill, or medical bills are stacking up and you cannot afford groceries or gas because they are so high nowadays. Well, the list can just go on and on and on. Our ancestors were not as reliant on grocery stores, gas, central a/c, or heat. In the old days, they had the skills to survive when crap hits the fan. It's never too late to learn a new skill, so let's learn how to be a little more self-sufficient.

This month let's look at food. First off, just plant something, in a pot, in a raised bed, or in the ground. This is your first step to self-sufficiency. Plant you a tomato, or some herbs, or cucumbers, even on the patio of your apartment. There is always a way to grow something. Now let's talk about food storage and what to store. Food can be stored in buckets with a gamma seal lid, mason jars, or Mylar bags. You can dehydrate it, can it, or freeze-dry it. What should I be storing? Grains, beans, rice, oatmeal, dried fruits and nuts, and canned goods from the grocery store like meats and vegetables. Every time you go to the grocery store pick one extra bag of rice or beans or oatmeal. To keep larvae from hatching freeze your grains, beans, and rice for 24 -48 hours if possible. Let your rice, beans, or grains come to room temperature completely before storing them in buckets or Mylar bags. You can put an oxygen absorber in with your food to help with moisture. Also, you can place a cup of Diatomaceous Earth in with your beans, grains, or rice as well to keep larvae from hatching. If you or your family will not eat it do not buy it and store it. When storing food think about calories, what will give me the calories needed for the day? Just remember you can Grow it, Raise It, or Make It. **JB**

## National and Community Phone Numbers

Gulf County Sheriff's Office.....1-850-639-5717  
 National Runaway Hotline.....1-800-621-4000  
 National Child Abuse Hotline.....1-800-422-4453  
 National Domestic Violence .....1-800-799-7233  
 Center Missing/Exploited Children.....1-800-843-5633  
 National Poison Center Hotline ..... 1-800-222-1222  
 Substance Abuse Help Line.....1-800-662-4357





## LOCAL AUTO PAINTER KEEPS 1949 CHEVY AS A HOBBY TO THE DELIGHT OF THE OLD FOLKS IN TOWN

by Tom Wynn

**Historical background:** Mr. Rudy Madrid lives on Chipola Ave. in Wewahitchka. He paints cars (a true artist) for a living and does so as a hobby as well. The air swamp cooler on the side window was bought by Rudy in California for about 200 dollars. The car is a 1949 Chevy Styleline Deluxe Coupe.

Rudy said, “I owned this car for almost 4 years now. It was originally painted black when I first bought it. I’ve always wanted to build a California lowrider so that’s what I am doing to it now. The car has air ride devices installed. I would like to thank all my friends who helped me custom build the installation of the various devices attached in and around the automobile and those who took part in its development as well: Domino Demunck; Richie Ward; Chuck Haney; Scotty Bailey; Daniel Lopez; Roskie; Maylin Palmer; Kingsbury Auto Body; Domino’s Paint & Body for having a hand in this project! Cars never get built by just one person! Thanks everyone!”

**RM**

## BEE ASSOCIATION IS BORN IN GULF COUNTY

by Dan Bost

Why would anyone keep 60,000 stinging insects in a box, open it often to see what is going on, and call it a hobby? Well, thousands of Floridians do! There are nearly 5,200 registered beekeepers in Florida, and the number continues to increase. Beekeeping is one of the hottest, fastest-growing hobbies, with backyard beekeepers making up 85% of Florida’s registered beekeepers.

Why honeybees? They are most beneficial for pollinating crops, actually one-third of what we eat, they produce honey, worth approximately \$23 million in 2019, and other hive by-products which can be packaged and sold.

There are many methods of learning how to keep, or manage, honeybees, the internet being the best and worst, but, in the bee yard education with an experienced mentor is the best! This one-on-one education is where backyard beekeepers and commercial beekeepers’ cross paths.

Commercial beekeepers often have decades of knowledge and see things monthly, if not daily, that backyard beekeepers rarely see. How do these two paths cross? That is where a local Beekeeping Association is invaluable.

A local Beekeepers Association helps support beekeepers of all ages and levels of experience by supplying a structured environment to exchange experiences and ideas. It also supplies a public service by collecting honeybee swarms and sharing the importance of honeybees both to the agricultural and food industries. Gulf County, having a rich history of Tupelo Honey, Florida’s official state honey, is long overdue for a Beekeepers Association.

I am proud to announce the first meeting of your Association will occur on August 2nd, 2022, 6 pm at the UF/IFAS Extension Gulf County Office, located at 232 E Lake Avenue, Wewa. This meeting is open to all ages and all levels of beekeeping experience. Please join us and help create something buzz worthy. UF/IFAS Extension is a vital partner in aiding beekeepers and their associations with educational outreach.

Extension Agents can help with questions on hive maintenance, pest management, pollen/nectar plant identification and many other topics. Be sure to mark your calendars for two great events. Each year during the late spring, the UF/IFAS Extension Northwest District will host the Beekeeping in the Panhandle Conference & Tradeshow in Chipley. This event provides hands-on open hive experiences, presentations on the latest in research-based beekeeping management practices, interaction with expert beekeepers, vendors with beekeeping equipment, and hive products.

There’s also another great opportunity just around the corner. Bee College is less than two months away! The UF/IFAS Honeybee Research and Extension Lab is hosting the next Bee College in Panama City on August 12th & 13th. Bee College is a training event for beekeepers of all experience levels. Bee College

participants get the opportunity to learn about honeybees and beekeeping from the state experts. Class topics include beginner beekeeping courses, in-hive skill practice, research updates, native bees, and more!

For more information on Bee College and the registration link, please visit:

<https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/honey-bee/extension/events-and-activities/bee-college/>

DB

### CALL 911 in Case of All Emergencies

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GULF CO. SHERIFF'S WEWA OFFICE.....	(850) 639-5717
AUTO DETAILING-Dakota Ake.....	(727) 916-1423
BAYSIDE FLORIST.....	(850) 229-1111
BAHA BY THE BAY/A BIT BUSY-Katie.....	(850) 532-8583
BEACH REALTY- Sheryl Bradley .....	(850) 227-5233
BEE'S & BOTANICAL-Leslie.....	(863) 781-1210
BIG RIVER HONEY-Joesph & Steven.....	(850) 247-7176
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OFFICE-Joe.....	(850) 227-1223
CHARLIE PETTIS PEST CONTROL.....	(850)381-2942
COASTAL REALTY-Diane Jacques.....	(850) 549-7673
CORNER CAFÉ-Ann & Mitchell.....	(850) 639-2636
DOMINO'S PAINT & BODY.....	(850) 340-0953
FISHER'S BUILDING SUPPLY Peggy.....	(850) 639-5102
GASKIN-GRADY INSURANCE .....	(850)-639-5077
GRACELAND PORTABLE-Jodi Rustin.....	(850) 481-0855
GRI BAY PROPERTIES-Kathe Jones.....	(850) 247-9131
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HEAVEN SENT WEWA INC.....	(850) 294-7839
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MILLER'S HEATING & AIR-Jason.....	(850) 638-3319
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SHRIMP LADY-Paula.....	(850) 866-8520
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SUBWAY-Mike.....	(850) 639-4100
ST. JOE LIBRARY-Mimi Minnick.....	(850) 229-8879
TAUNTON BUILDING SUPPLY-Adam.....	(850) 639-2336
THE HONEY HOLE-Brenda Gail.....	(850)639-9985
THE WEWA HISTORICAL Society-Ann.....	(850) 867-5970
THE WEWA NEWS-Tom.....	(850) 404-2914
TRUE NUTRITION.....	(850) 639-1007
WEWA CITY HALL.....	(850) 639-2605
WEWA LIBRARY-Joyelle.....	(850) 639-2419
WEWA RV PARK-Bob.....	(850) 639-5721

### NOTICE

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 efforts. TW

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The Friends of the Wewahitchka Library meets the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month. The next meeting will be July 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. CT. Anyone is welcome to attend. The Wewa Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:00am-5:00pm CT. For more information, please call us at: (850) 639-2419. JL

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