

THE TUPELO COUNTY NEWS™

THE WEWA NEWS™



“The Good News Newspaper”

JULY 2023-02 >> No. 07-02<<

A FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER Take One!



**HAPPY 4TH OF JULY WEWA!
FIREWORKS ON LAKE ALICE
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FREEDOM!**



**GASKIN WILL BE MAYOR FOR ANOTHER
FOUR YEARS!**

by Tom Wynn



Mayor Phillip Gaskin put his name in the hat for another 4-year run as Wewa's Mayor. There were no other candidates so there will be no re-election cost for the city of Wewahitchka. Congratulations!

Mayor Gaskin, thank you for your service to your hometown and Gulf County, Florida. (Pictured is Mayor Gaskin holding his award for 25 years as Mayor service last September, with his lovely wife, K-leigh).

After the June city meeting everyone glad-handed with the mayor and thanked him for yet another 4 years of service to our city. The mayor is well versed in the construction industry and public works, making him and his city commissioners a valuable source of knowledge to the operation of the city as a whole.

THE WEWA FIRE HOUSE IS BACK IN THE



NEWS! The City Attorney, Ms. Michelle Jordan notified the city commission during the June city meeting of an upcoming 2-day

mediation meet with the bonding company in late August. The Bonding Company and the original contractor Winterfell Construction, Inc. is in a long-lasting lawsuit with the City of Wewahitchka for poor quality construction of the new fire house and the bankruptcy of the owner of Winterfell Construction, Mr. Tommy Hamm.

The firehouse construction project (funded by FEMA) has turned into a major mess for all concerned. Ms. Rachel Jackson, the city Clerk filed a request with FEMA a few months ago for an extension of 3 years for to completion of the lawsuit and construction of the building. The State of Florida has given the City of Wewahitchka a Grant for \$1,000,000.00 USD to help the city get a new Firehouse built, effective 1 July 2023.

The Gulf County Administration and County Commissioners were instrumental in the Grant effort. It is wonderful to see the county and the city working together to make life better for the north end of the county. THANK YOU ALL!

(See earlier Wewa News articles on our website for additional information about the fire house situation).

THE STAR NEWSPAPER GETS A NEW OFFICE SPACE

by Tom Wynn



Ms. Wendy Weitzel, the Editor of The Star Newspaper in Port St. Joe (Owned by NEVESMEDIA Publishing Group, Inc.) has moved to Reid Ave. Their new office space is now located directly across the street from the Port St. Joe City Hall inside the Tapper Company Building at: 418 Reid Ave. in Port St. Joe.

TAUNTON FAMILY CHILDREN'S HOME IS PROUD OF ONE OF THEIRS

by Tom Wynn



Officer Garreth Hamm, of the Gulf County Sheriff's Office attended the program at Gulf Coast State College to train as a Deputy for our Sheriff's Office (Sheriff Mike Harrison). After completing Basic Recruit training, he made the next step to become a valuable member of our Sheriff's Department, making Wewahitchka proud of him. He is married to his high school sweetheart Kaylee, they tied the knot back in 2020. They are a fine couple and Wewa looks forward to seeing them grow as a family. Wewa loves its own and enjoys seeing our young folks make good quality decisions in their lives. Job well done Garreth! Just one more success story for Gulf County and Wewa. Praise The Lord! You are a breath of fresh air!



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John 1: 1-5

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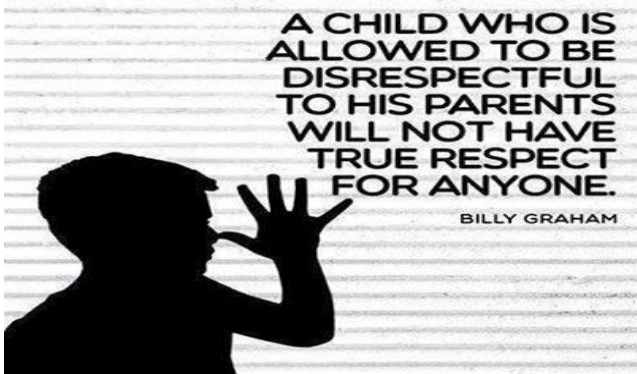
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1 John 5:1-6

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A BIT OF WEWA HISTORY



Thomas H. McDaniel and Terry Howell McDaniel Fishing on the Famous Deadlakes Wewa Florida Back in the Day!
(Courtesy of Dixie McDaniel)



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*HELP SAVE THE
OLD COURT HOUSE WRITE A LETTER TO THE
GULF COUNTY BOARD*

THE WEWA LIBRARY

by Joyelle Linton



The Charles Whitehead Public Library is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 9:00-5:00 CT. Please call us at (850) 639-2419 for more information.

This year's summer reading program, "All Together Now", started in early June. On Friday, June 9th the library hosted a community helper program. Many local children came out to meet some of our very own community heroes. Guests from the Gulf County Sheriff's Office, Gulf County EMS, Dalkeith Volunteer Fire Department, Gulf Correctional Institution K-9 Unit, Gulf Coast Electrical Cooperative, and PanCare Dental attended this awesome kickoff event. After reading stories to the children, each group spoke to the children about how they help our community and what they do each day in their job. Tables were set up for the children to go around the room and receive activity packets, fire hats, and other goodies. Captain Chris Buchanan took the children's fingerprints for Child Identification Kits. During a break in the storm, we were able to go outdoors to tour all of the vehicles: police car, ambulance, firetruck, electrical work truck, K-9 dogs, and the dental bus. Of course, the kids loved this part! Afterwards, we all headed back inside to create some fun crafts.

We would like to thank all of our community helpers for participating in this year's summer program. Thank you for all that you do for Wewahitchka and our community! website www.nwrls.com. JL

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THE NEW EMERGENCY RADIO ASSOCIATION CONTINUES TO GROW

by Tom Wynn

A group of worried locals have decided to create a new organization to make sure we have emergency communications in our local area of the Panhandle, during the next big event. The latest news is that the small group is gathering more individuals and families who are working to have comms with one another in case of a loss of communication in the Wewa area, being that we are rural and can easily lose power and comms with the outside world.

The local HAM Radio Operators have agreed to aid the new group with the project. From the Gulf County Sheriff's office to about 45 miles north of Wewa up Hwy 71 North is their goal of contact. Folks as far as I-10, north of Wewa to White City area are interested in having communication with one another in case a need arises.

Our next step is to erect two repeater towers, which we have volunteers who will allow the group to place them on their property.

The group has decided on a name, "**The Tupelo Radio Group.**" They are making progress in mapping out the GMRS Radio network, where the repeaters are to be located. We have started doing regular testing on Sunday afternoons to track our progress. We are looking for some Ham Operators in the Wewa area to join us.

If anyone is interested in joining the group, please contact: **Mr. Dudley Balmer at: 317-379-1644.** Your cost would be \$160 dollars for your radio and antenna. (Radioddity email address: www.radioddity.com)

Those of you that use Lake Alice Park-Please clean up after yourself. The city does its best to keep the park clean, but some people trash it and walk off. It costs money to keep the park and the bathrooms clean folks. Please help out and enjoy the park. Thank you!

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CITY OF WEWAHITCHKA PLANNING BOARD APPROVES A LAND USE FOR A SNOW CONE TRUCK TO SET UP SHOP!

by Tom Wynn

In the June meeting the Wewa planning board approved Ms. Carol Luevano of South Highway 71 to use a lot at 792 1st street (located approximately behind the Emerald Coast Credit Union Building area). Our understanding is, there will be a snow cone truck placed there for the public to enjoy!

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The Story of "The Life Changer" On The Bus Bench

Based on a True Story by Tom Wynn Jr.

FORWORD: This is a story I wrote about the Old Man on the bus bench which was based on a true story that my father told me about several times during my lifetime.

I wrote this story down in San Francisco about 1989. I showed it to a fellow Coast Guardsman that was a Playwright, creating Plays for the local area in San Francisco. He loved it so much that he asked me for copyright permission so he could turn it into a local play. He was getting out of the Coast Guard about that time and was planning to move to New York City to write plays for Broadway. He had hopes of it being in NY theaters. He changed the story somewhat to suit the local public. I still have a copy of the play in my files.

Prelude: This story begins in the Deep South, in the Heart of Dixie. In Birmingham, Alabama...It was hard times for a young married couple that had just received a blessing from God, a healthy baby boy. This new family of three was poor but happy and glad to be alive.

Unknown to this young couple, their lives were about to change forever more. One fine day in the life of a young father, we will call him Billy, an amazing turn of events happened, an event that would change the course of history for this young man, husband, and father. It was a minor event in the history of America or the world for that matter, but a major event for this young family within the Kingdom of God. Something that most people would not give a second thought to. It was just a few minutes in time, nothing but a puff of smoke or vapor in the annals of the modern world.

Let me take you back in time, to the beginning, where it all began... It all started in the late winter of 1955, the sun was shining brightly, but it was still a chilly morning. Billy had on a long sleeve shirt with the Firestone company emblem on it, over his left pocket, where he kept his cigarettes. The boss gave him several sets to wear for a uniform.

He worked at a Firestone company store where he repaired a new device that would soon be in every home in America and in the world, the Television set. An amazing black box that would forever change the world, as it was known at that time. Never again would the world be the same. Billy was glad to be part of that change. But a different kind of change would come into his life that he would've never dreamt of.

His life would turn in a new direction forever. Billy spent 6 years in the U.S. Navy at the tail end of World War II. As a young boy, hobbyist, he learned electronics, so the Navy made him an Aircraft Electronics' Technician (AT). He was of average height, 26 years old, with jet-black curly hair and brown eyes. A good-looking man with a square jaw. He sported a golden tan, being from sunny Florida. At this point in his life, he was a very shy man as well. Just a common Joe in the vast world, having lived through a Great Depression and a World War, trying to raise his newly made family and make ends meet. Billy told me he made about sixty dollars a week in those days as a TV repairman. Now on to the "Life Changer."

On a bright, but chilly day, Billy decided he would step out the door of Firestone's storefront and take a smoke break after a few hours of working on TV's that morning. As he began to light his cigarette, he leaned against the doorframe with his legs crossed and his arms folded. He rubbed his arms as he took deep breaths of smoke into his lungs. Being chilly, the smoke billowed out of his mouth with the moisture of

his breath, filling the air all around him. Soon a very old gentleman walked up to the bus bench that sat directly in front of the Firestone storefront. He was looking down watching his feet shuffle as he approached the wooden bench. As Billy continued his smoke break, he noticed the old gentleman was wearing a dark colored overcoat with the collar pulled up around his face and neck. He had a gray, white beard with black mixed in amongst the white hair, sticking out of the edge of the collar. He was wearing a very nice, but old cap pulled down around his ears.

Billy never really saw the old man's face directly, only the back of his head as he began to sit down on the bus bench in front of the store. Billy was just about finished with his cigarette, when along came a second man to the bus bench. He was a young man, light brown hair and rosy cheeks. The young man walked up to the old gentleman and asked if he minded if he sat and waited for the bus, which was due any moment. The old man nodded affirmatively as the young man sat down. Well, it was getting close to the end of Billy's cigarette when the old man began to talk to the young person on the bench with him.

Now all this time Billy just watched the two on the bus bench. They never looked up or saw him standing in the doorway, for that matter. Just two people, sitting on a bus bench waiting for the next bus to pick them up. And of course, there was Billy, a young fellow minding his own business, taking a smoke break, as he had done many times before this day.

This day would somehow be different than all the rest. As the old gentleman began to speak, his voice was deep and strong. His voice carried in the chilly air of Birmingham that morning, what a blessing that turned out to be, as you will soon see.

As he spoke, the young man crossed his legs in the opposite direction of the elderly gentleman, his body language saying, "I am not listening mister." But nonetheless, the old gentleman began talking to him in a clear and manly voice. He began to tell him about the Bible, the Holy Bible. He talked to the young man for several minutes. Before long, the young man uncrossed his legs and began to really listen to the wise old gentleman. He told him all about Christ Jesus and all about the Old Testament beginnings of the world, how God created all things; why Jesus Christ had to die for him and for the entire world. By now Billy had finished his cigarette. He just stood there in amazement

as the elderly Gent explained the Bible to this young man. Billy's ears hung on every word that came out of this amazing person. The words were all so beautiful to Billy. He was in awe! As the old gentleman told his stories of the Holy Bible and then told the young man what it all meant, Billy was amazed how well the man knew the Bible and understood its meaning and purpose as well.

This kindly old man told so much in just a short time. It was amazing what this man knew. He was so nice, so sweet, and so kind to the young man that sat with him. Billy noticed the change over the young man's position, on the bench, as the man continued to tell him all the wonders of the Scriptures.

Time stood still as the wise man spoke. Billy just stood there listening and learning all that he could. His ears were burning, and his heart was bursting. His mind was racing to take in all this wonderful knowledge that this gentleman was spouting.

Billy was born at the beginning of what would be known as the Great Depression of the 1930's. He was raised in a broken home. His mother left him and his father alone during the great depression years. His dad was a Railroad Depot Agent. He had to work daily, and Billy was left to his own most of the time during the summers. Poor eating and sleeping habits left Billy small, frail and undernourished. Food and shelter for the bachelors was available most of the time, in boarding houses and old houses that they would rent. Billy's father, Ralph, would be laid off from time to time due to the hard times of the country. Billy spent his childhood in the poor southern parts of old Florida, in the small towns where his dad would be the pleasant Depot Agent down at the railroad Depot.

All those that met Ralph loved him. He was a good man, a very handsome man, with his black hair parted down the middle and combed back, a well-groomed person. He could send morse code faster than most folks could talk. He was so fast that he could talk to you, send a message and read another one coming in, all at the same time. He learned the railroad business as a child helping at the depot across the street from the family farm in Waterford Junction (Newton, Alabama).

Billy learned about the Bible from his mom. She would make him go to church, but not living a spiritual life herself, the young boy could care less about Godly matters. That day, things were about to change.

As Billy stood in the doorway of his workplace, in total amazement of the vast knowledge of this person, he began to dream of a day when he might know the Bible as well as this man did. This old gentleman with his white gray hair, his bearded face, his dark colored overcoat and old hat, changed the life and the fate of another person unknowingly. Billy never saw the face of the old man, nor did he ever see him again. The bus, it turned out, was slow coming, which was great for Billy.

Finally, the bus arrived and both men got on board the bus and departed, never to be seen again. That wise gent will never know how his words touched the lives of generations to come. He never saw Billy in the storefront doorway, having never stood up and looked to see if someone was there. He was most likely thinking that he was talking to one young man; on one bus bench; in one large southern city and in one vast country. Unknowingly, he started a chain of events that would change the life of Billy and his children and their children forever more.

Blessed be this old man on a city bus bench. Only in the next life will he finally know what his words did that chilly morning in Birmingham, in the Heart of Dixie.

Now for the rest of the story...after the two men left. Billy began to think about how wonderful it would be to know the Bible as well as this wise man. He went back to work. Thoughts of the old man kept gnawing on his mind. Later that evening, Billy went home to his family. No one knew it, but Billy began to change inside. He began to see the world in a new light. He began to thirst for the knowledge of God and His Word.

Soon thereafter, Billy and Penny (his wife's nickname) decided to move back to Florida, their old stomping grounds. Friends and family were there. Maybe he could land a job in the TV repair business he figured. A rumor had started that a TV station had been built in Ft. Myers. In those days of early television, there were very few TV broadcasting stations in the country. Folks only had TV's where these stations were, thus TV repairmen came to that area to repair them. In those days TVs broke often.

As they traveled back down to central Florida, they ran low on money; Penny and Billy stole gas out of parked cars to make it to Birmingham. Well, they started to do that again on the way back to Florida. Nothing seemed

to change in their lives. The same old sinful life abounds. While they were traveling to Florida Penny made a little bed for their baby boy of 5 months. She placed him in a metal file cabinet drawer, then put it just below her feet on the floorboard of their late forties panel truck. Penny was breast-feeding their infant son, so she picked him up to feed him and within seconds the heater hose broke and boiling hot water poured into the metal file drawer. It would've killed the infant boy, scalded him to death. They both praised God for her timeliness. This would not be the last time Satan tries to destroy their first born during his lifetime.

After arriving back in Florida, the young family had a few disappointments. Billy and Penny came to know a preacher in Lakeland, Florida. Lakeland was also the home of Billy's mother and step grandparents. They were loving and kind to his family. They invited them over for a visit soon after hearing of their return to the area from another relative.

The couple began to attend church services. One evening Billy and Penny were at their new pastor's home. The preacher boldly asks Billy if he knew the Lord as his personal savior. Billy told him no. So, both men stepped into the pastor's study, and they knelt down and prayed the sinner's prayer. Billy asked God to come into his life and change his heart forever. That was a very blessed day for the young family.

Billy finally realized that he must change as a person. His old self was gone forever. To this day Billy has been a devoted follower of Christ Jesus, until he was called home to be with the Lord in 2007.

He stopped all of his bad habits and tried to follow Jesus in all things. Now as time passed by for the young family, it came up that someone would pay for Penny to go to Bible College. What a wonderful idea, they thought. Then the Bible College secretary told Billy that he might be able to attend college on his G.I. Bill for free. The young couple was delighted with this news and soon started what would turn out to be the beginning of a whole new life for them both.

You see folks...that old man on the bench, which Billy never saw the face of nor never met, well he changed the course of history for this family. Yes, this story is true, and it is about my father, The Rev. Thomas William Wynn Sr. A Biblical Scholar of over 50 years before his passing.

He finished school at the Bible College in Lakeland Florida and a few years later was offered a position as a teacher at the same school, after his first 4-year tour in the U.S. Coast Guard. The Bible College is all gone now. When I was 12 it was torn down to build the first Red Lobster restaurant in the Country (Summer of 1967 I believe). That's another story.

I was raised in that Bible College. At the age of 8 years old I would sneak down the stairs (the dorms were two floors above the classrooms) and I learned from the other teachers as often as I could. They all would let me sit in on their classes, because I would go to the back of the class and be very quiet. Well, one day my father found me on the steps heading back to bed after leaving one of the classes. I thought I was in big trouble! He just asked me why I would do this. I remember being in my feet pajamas (must have been winter) sitting near the top of the staircase explaining to him why I wanted so much to learn about the Bible.

I had a burning desire to learn about it. I was about 5 months old when my parents started Bible College. I grew up in a crib listening to my father read the Bible to me as he did his studies. I learned the Bible as a child every night as he did his homework. They finished school when I was about 4 years old. Dad soon thereafter joined the U.S. Coast Guard to finish his military career.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS ARE A GIFT FROM GOD!

At the age of 3, I was in a Sunday school classroom. It was known as Children's Church if I remember rightly. I watched very closely as our Sunday school teacher used a green felt backboard with paper characters, to show us how Jesus removed our burdens (a pile of wooden sticks on the back of a peasant man, bent over) from our backs on to His...this burden was called, "SIN!" That day I understood for the first-time what Jesus Christ did for us on the Cross. I got saved!

I became a believer in Jesus Christ as my personal savior. I completely understood what he did for me. To this day I remember that moment. I cannot tell you the date, but I can tell you I completely understood what happened at the cross and what Jesus did for me as a sinner in this world of ours. Now back to the story on the steps... My father listened to me, and then told me I could not come down anymore and to go back to my bed. As best as I can remember, from that day on, he

taught me at his bedside almost nightly. He taught me the ways of God and gave me knowledge like very few children get today. I learned the Bible at my fathers' bedside up and until I was 17 years old, when I too left to join the U.S. Coast Guard, to save lives for a living. For the rest of his life my dad was my best friend and Bible teacher. I loved him for the gift of knowledge of God's Word that is instilled in me. There is no greater gift than to teach your children the Word of God, to show them love unconditionally and to give them loving discipline. These are the most important matters they will ever learn from you, in my opinion.

The old man on the bus bench that chilly morning in Birmingham started a chain of events that changed the lives of several generations of Wynn's. All my children (plus my son-in-law and daughter-in-law) knows the Lord and have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Our grandchildren were saved at the age of 4, praise the Lord! My brother and his family are all saved and many people that have touched our lives were saved as we witnessed to them about our Savior Jesus Christ throughout our lives. Blessed be His name.

I hope one day to meet this old gentleman and kiss him for his living testimony that set the tone for the rest of eternity for our family and those we share the gospel with. You just never know who or how you will touch one's heartstrings, bringing them also to the very Throne of God, Abba Father. Have you shared Jesus with your children? I am a very blessed man, having all my family saved by Christ Jesus. Thank you old man on the bus bench, unknowingly you became a "Life Changer." You never know who is listening or watching or reading your walk with The Lord Jesus.

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AMERICAN BOY SCOUTS SEEK TO HAVE A NEW TROOP IN WEWAHITCHKA AREA

by Tom Wynn

Scout Master Tom Reynolds has contacted the Editor of The Wewa News about the idea of starting up a new Boy

Scout Troop in the Wewa area. The Boy Scouts have been reading historical articles in The Wewa News from all over the Panhandle. They can explore the forests and lakes of North Gulf County, by boats and by hiking the area, as well as camping in our wildernesses. If anyone is interested in helping to develop a new Boy Scout Troop in the north end of Gulf County, please contact Scout Master Tom Reynolds at: 850-774-8335

OPEN LETTER TO THE GULF COUNTY COMMISSION

by Tom Wynn

Dear Commissioners:

We want to acknowledge our whole-hearted support for saving, restoring, preserving, and keeping our beautiful, historic Old Gulf County Courthouse located at 222 North 2nd Street, in Downtown Wewahitchka.

It is one of only a few historic buildings left in northern Gulf County. This remarkable, red brick courthouse was started in 1925 and was supervised by Mr. Frank Rish and completed to its present glory in 1927.

Gulf County was formed out of Calhoun County in 1925. We are planning our upcoming Gulf County Centennial Celebration in 2025. We would love to see it completely restored to its former glory.

We in Wewa find it to be very historical and valuable to us today. We know you love it too and respect our wishes to do all that you can to bring it to a point of its former glory and usefulness. It is a monument to historical Florida as it is a very rare building style, as my understanding that there were only 5 built with the courtroom floor being slanted, and it is one of only two left in Florida today.

"We The People" in Gulf County find it to be beautiful and worthy of restoration. It was built in the classical revival architectural style, made possible by Mr. W.H. Taylor. As you know it served us well as the Gulf County Court House until 1965 when the county seat moved to Port St. Joe to a new courthouse, which has since been beautifully upgraded.

The Old Courthouse is very valuable historically to those of us in Gulf County. Once restored it presents several possibilities, including a new city hall for Wewahitchka, a part of it to become a museum, office spaces for local business to cover the cost of its upkeep, as well as a new office space for the Sheriff Office (supplying 24/7 security to the building). Thank you for your support!

HOW TO CONTEXT READ THE BIBLE

by Grandpa Tom Wynn

This little cheat sheet helped me many years ago, I keep a copy in each of my Bibles, so maybe it will help you:

1. Who wrote/spoke the passage and
 2. To whom it was written to?
 3. What does the passage say?
Are there any word phrases in the passage to examine?
 4. What is the immediate context?
 5. What is the broader context in the chapter?
 6. Are there related verses?
 7. What is the historical and cultural context?
 8. What did it mean to the original audience?
 9. What does it mean to you?
-



The Legend of Tate's Hell

By B. Scott Bozeman

Jebediah Tate was a superstitious farmer that lived near Carrabelle, Florida. He had one son who was born just before the war and named him Cebe. Jebediah was a Civil War veteran, and his wife was half Cherokee Indian. He bought 160 acres for \$5 as a homestead grant after the war.

Cebe Tate helped clear his father's land, chased cattle, and gathered pine oil. His mother died from scarlet fever sometime after the war. It was hard going, and Cebe's father made a pact with a local medicine man for good fortune. As long as they stayed out of the tiny cypress forest and gave him one pig a year, they would have good fortune.

For three years, they gave up a pig when the medicine man came around, and things were good. But in 1874, they decided to keep the pig and deny the old Indian. The Medicine man warned them that they would not only see hard times, but they would go through hell. That year Cebe's father died from malaria, the pine trees gave very little oil, the sugar cane was stunted, and scrub cows started to disappear. But the pigs ate good and multiplied so fast Cebe had to build two new pig pens in the fall.

In the spring of 1875, Cebe got married to a mail order bride from New York City. She was a fiery German Immigrant. But there was a problem, Cebe only had pigs left, and she was of the Jewish Faith. She ate corn, potatoes, and pancakes with molasses, but she wanted

beef. Cebe took off into the woods to find a cow, any cow, to quiet his bride.

Armed with a shotgun and accompanied by his hunting dogs, he journeyed into the swamp in search of a cow. His dogs took off chasing a panther, and he lost his gun in the mud. Tate was lost in the swamp for seven days and nights. He went into the Dwarf Cypress stand to escape the relentless bugs and fell asleep against the trees that were protected by the Indian's magic. He awoke when bitten by a snake and ran blindly through the swamp, delirious from the bite and from drinking the murky waters. Finally, he came to a clearing near Carrabelle, living only long enough to murmur the words, "My name is Cebe Tate, and I just came through Hell!"

This local oral lore of Cebe Tate's adventure took place in 1875 and ever since, the area has been known as Tate's Hell, the legendary and forbidden swamp.

A SALUTE TO THE USCG ON CELEBRATION OF 4th OF JULY- OUR FREEDOM DAY!

by Tom Wynn

51 years ago, this month I joined the USCG
And Retired 31 years ago this month
Thank you USCG for saving my life!

Praise God for the USCG, we were born to save the weak, the lost, the sad, the cold and fearful. We come bringing safety and comfort to the lost and tired. We offer a hand and a prayer to all we find in the darkness. We bring light and peace to all we find.

The USCG is not respecting of race, color, gender or nationality, we save the living and the dead alike, but we pray we find them all living to bring them home safe to their loved ones.

We have saved many and lost some. Those we lost are heroes and will be remembered having given their own lives for their fellow man.

I for one am indebted to the USCG for my very life. Praise God the Most High for The Coastie who saved me as a boy, for a lifesaving father who served to save others and those that raised me in the USCG to be the man I am today.

The USCG was God's gift to mankind, and to a thankful nation who raised such fine men and women who serve 24/7/365 in one of the finest services in the world. May God bless America and The USCG members, my heroes.

2023 PRELIMINARY TAXABLE VALUE ANNOUNCED BY GULF COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER MITCH BURKE

Gulf County Property Appraiser Mitch Burke has provided the 2023 Preliminary Taxable Value to the Florida Department of Revenue along with all taxing authorities for budget planning purposes. The values include real and personal property – per Florida Statute 200.065(7).

Mr. Burke said, “This years’ taxable value is the highest Gulf County has ever seen. It surpasses year 2008 by \$166.29 million or 5.78%. Prior to Hurricane Michael back in 2018, the current 2023 Preliminary Taxable Value has increased 76.33%. Transactions (Sales) in terms of price paid has continued to increase in our market, however the number of qualified sales has declined. According to our office, 2022 qualified sales were at 1,107. That’s a decline from 2021 by 21.7%.

Burke seems to think that the increase in mortgage rates has pushed inventory down to record lows. Both new listing and total listings have dropped from this time of year. And that fuels homebuyer competition in some markets and keeps homes prices from falling further. Right now, nearly every U.S. homeowner, should they sell and purchase another home will move into a higher mortgage rate. As a result, those people that don’t have to sell won’t. That’s why pending homes sales nationwide are down about 17% from a year ago.

Mr. Burke went on to say, “While our office has worked diligently on the valuation of new market sales and trends, we continue to work at restoring those properties repaired and or replaced as a result of Hurricane Michael. He went on to say that out of the total 9,971 improved parcels, 7,678 or 80% had some sort of damage associated with it as of January 1, 2019. Today, our office has either replaced or restored 7,609 buildings, leaving us only 692 or 6.94% still with some sort of damage. Some of the economic trends for Gulf County appear to show big interest in the area. As of January 1, 2023, New Construction and additions accounted for \$146.80 million in Taxable Value, an increase of 89.17% from 2022’s \$77.60 million. Burke said, prior to Hurricane Michael in 2018, New Construction and additions has increased \$104.85 million or 249.93%. The City of Port St. Joe has seen a tremendous amount of growth in taxable value due to new construction of single-family homes from both DR Horton and Truland Homes. The City of Port St. Joe’s new construction and additions totaled \$66.90 million, a 135% increase from 2022 of \$28.47 million.

Under Florida law, county property appraisers must value every property in the state as of an effective date of January 1, 2023. Our appraisers consistently monitor market

transactions and trends. **Any increase or decrease in sales prices which occur in 2022 will impact property values as of our January 1, 2023, valuation.”**

Listed below are the 2023 Preliminary Taxable Values for the County, School Board, City of Port St. Joe and City of Wewahitchka. The percentage of change is reflective of the 2021 and 2022 “Final Certified Taxable Values” to the 2023 Estimate of Values: TAXING AUTHORITY 2023 PRELIM 2022-2023 % CHANGE 2021-2023 % CHANGE
GULF COUNTY \$3,066,307,241 22.58% 50.30%
GULF COUNTY SCHOOLS \$3,993,358,832 26.03% 73.04%
CITY – PSJ \$ 599,854,101 30.00% 61.50%
CITY – WEWA \$ 83,521,422 17.32% 34.10%
NEW CONSTRUCTION \$ 146,802,039 89.17% 133.54%
CLASSIFIED USE (AG.) \$ 62,391,272 8.17% 20.71%

The Gulf County Property Appraiser’s office is located at 1000 Cecil G. Costin Sr. Blvd., Port St. Joe; by phone at 850-229-6115; online at www.gulfpa.com

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32465 (Wewahitchka)
Single-Family Homes
April 2023 Year-to-Date

 CLOSED SALES <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: white; font-size: 0.8em;">↓ -18% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">14</div> </div>	 MEDIAN SALE PRICE <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: black; font-size: 0.8em;">↓ -2.8% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$193,250</div> </div>	 ACTIVE INVENTORY <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: white; font-size: 0.8em;">↑ 2.3% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">22</div> </div>
 DOLLAR VOLUME <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: white; font-size: 0.8em;">↓ -16% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">\$2,782,164</div> </div>	 NEW LISTINGS <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: black; font-size: 0.8em;">↑ 3.8% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">27</div> </div>	 NEW PENDING SALES <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="color: black; font-size: 0.8em;">↓ -24% from a year ago</div> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">16</div> </div>

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Matthew 26:52-54



THIS IS A SHOUT OUT TO MRS. HENRIETTA BRANCH!

The Wewa News would like to thank you for your love and support. You are one of the sweetest ladies in north Florida. Your love for your community and for the Lord is beyond measure. Thank you for all your inputs into the history of Wewahitchka, Gulf County and for your love for those that live in the north parts of our great county, Gulf County, a name that brings happy thoughts of pure white sandy beaches and deep blue water, a place of peace and joy, fun in the Sun and fishing like no buddies' business!

This is a special thanks to you and your husband who has given more than anyone would ever know to the sweetest little City in Florida and to those in your Church Community. Thank you for your deep devotion to the people you served at our local Post Office as a employee for many years. Remember this: "You are a wonderful example of a good and faithful woman, who is full of energy and a joy to be around, a good example of a good woman and friend."

Thank you! Ms. Henrietta.
We love you! TW



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JAMES 1:12

What are civil rights?

by Tom Wynn

Enjoy your Civil rights as they are personal rights guaranteed and protected by the U.S. Constitution and federal laws that were enacted by the U.S. Congress, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Civil rights include protection from unlawful discrimination, as well. But always keep in mind you have unalienable rights a Men and Women. It is in the Preamble to/of the U.S. Constitution folks. You can come and go under the U.S. Constitution as you please, as Men and Women. Your rights come directly from the Almighty. So dig more into this, before you lose what you got, because you do not study to show yourself approved, a workman that need not be ashamed.

The HHS Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces civil rights laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, religion, and sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity) by certain health care and human services entities:

- state and local social and health services agencies, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes,
- insurers who are participating in the Marketplace and receiving premium tax credits, and other entities receiving federal financial assistance from HHS.

Under these laws, all persons in the United States have a right to receive health care and human services in a nondiscriminatory manner. For example, you cannot be denied services or benefits simply because of your race, color, national origin, or disability. For more information about these laws and our authority under them, see this [Civil Rights home page](#).

Do yourself a favorite, learn who and what you are. Study so that you can not be fooled, lied to or managed by those that seek to harm you and your family. **TW**



Happy 4th of July Folks!

**Good things to know.
From the FBI website:**

Federal Civil Rights Statutes

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 249 - Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act

This statute makes it unlawful to willfully cause bodily injury—or attempting to do so with fire, firearm, or other dangerous weapon—when 1) the crime was committed because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin of any person, or 2) the crime was committed because of the actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of any person and the crime affected interstate or foreign commerce or occurred within federal special maritime and territorial jurisdiction.

The law also provides funding and technical assistance to state, local, and tribal jurisdictions to help them to more effectively investigate, prosecute, and prevent hate crimes.

The law provides for a maximum 10-year prison term, unless death (or attempts to kill) results from the offense, or unless the offense includes kidnapping or attempted kidnapping, or aggravated sexual abuse or attempted aggravated sexual abuse. For offenses not resulting in death, there is a seven-year statute of limitations. For offenses resulting in death, there is no statute of limitations.

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 241 - Conspiracy Against Rights

This statute makes it unlawful for two or more persons to conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any person of any state, territory or district in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him/her by the Constitution or the laws of the United States, (or because of his/her having exercised the same).

It further makes it unlawful for two or more persons to go in disguise on the highway or on the premises of another with the intent to prevent or hinder his/her free exercise or enjoyment of any rights so secured.

Punishment varies from a fine or imprisonment of up to ten years, or both; and if death results, or if such acts include kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse or an attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for any term of years, or for life, or may be sentenced to death.

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 242 - Deprivation of Rights Under Color of Law

This statute makes it a crime for any person acting under color of law, statute, ordinance, regulation, or custom to willfully deprive or cause to be deprived from any person those rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution and laws of the U.S.

This law further prohibits a person acting under color of law, statute, ordinance, regulation or custom to willfully subject or cause to be subjected any person to different punishments, pains, or penalties, than those prescribed for punishment of citizens on account of such person being an alien or by reason of his/her color or race.

Acts under "color of any law" include acts not only done by federal, state, or local officials within the bounds or limits of their lawful authority, but also acts done without and beyond the bounds of their lawful authority; provided that, in order for unlawful acts of any official to be done under "color of any law," the unlawful acts must be done while such official is purporting or pretending to act in the performance of his/her official duties. This definition includes, in addition to law enforcement officials, individuals such as Mayors, Council persons, Judges, Nursing Home Proprietors, Security Guards, etc., persons who are bound by laws, statutes ordinances, or customs.

Punishment varies from a fine or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, and if bodily injury results or if such acts include the use, attempted use, or threatened use of a dangerous weapon, explosives, or fire shall be fined or imprisoned up to ten years or both, and if death results, or if such acts include kidnapping or an attempt to kidnap, aggravated sexual abuse or an attempt to commit aggravated sexual abuse, or an attempt to kill, shall be fined under this title, or imprisoned for any term of years or for life, or both, or may be sentenced to death.

Title 18, U.S.C., Section 245 - Federally Protected Activities

1) This statute prohibits willful injury, intimidation, or interference, or attempt to do so, by force or threat of force of any person or class of persons because of their activity as:

- a. A voter, or person qualifying to vote...;
- b. a participant in any benefit, service, privilege, program, facility, or activity provided or administered by the United States;
- c. an applicant for federal employment or an employee by the federal government;
- d. a juror or prospective juror in federal court; and
- e. a participant in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

2) Prohibits willful injury, intimidation, or interference or attempt to do so, by force or threat of force of any person because of race, color, religion, or national origin and because of his/her activity as:

Whoever (1) uses fire or an explosive to commit any felony which may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, or (2) carries an explosive during the commission of any felony which may be prosecuted in a court of the United States, including a felony which provides for an enhanced punishment if committed by the use of a deadly or dangerous weapon or device shall, in addition to the punishment provided for such felony, be sentenced to imprisonment for five years but not more than 15 years. In the case of a second or subsequent conviction under this subsection, such persons shall be sentenced to imprisonment for ten years but not more than 25 years.

Title 42, U.S.C., Section 3631 - Criminal Interference with Right to Fair Housing: This statute makes it unlawful for any individual(s), by the use of force or threatened use of force, to injure, intimidate, or interfere with (or attempt to injure, intimidate, or interfere with), any person's housing rights because of that person's race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin. Among those housing rights enumerated in the statute are:

- The sale, purchase, or renting of a dwelling; the occupation of a dwelling; the financing of a dwelling; contracting or negotiating for any of the rights enumerated above; applying for or participating in any service, organization, or facility relating to the sale or rental of dwellings.

This statute also makes it unlawful by the use of force or threatened use of force, to injure, intimidate, or interfere with any person who is assisting an individual or class of persons in the exercise of their housing rights.

Punishment varies from a fine of up to \$1,000 or imprisonment of up to one year, or both, and if bodily injury results, shall be fined up to \$10,000 or imprisoned up to ten years, or both, and if death results, shall be subject to imprisonment for any term of years or for life.

Title 42, U.S.C., Section 14141 - Pattern and Practice: This civil statute was a provision within the Crime Control Act of 1994 and makes it unlawful for any governmental authority, or agent thereof, or any person acting on behalf of a governmental authority, to engage in a pattern or practice of conduct by law enforcement officers or by officials or employees of any governmental agency with responsibility for the administration of juvenile justice or the incarceration of juveniles that deprives persons of rights, privileges, or immunities secured or protected by the Constitution or laws of the United States.

Whenever the Attorney General has reasonable cause to believe that a violation has occurred, the Attorney General, for or in the name of the United States, may in a civil action obtain appropriate equitable and declaratory relief to eliminate the pattern or practice.

Types of misconduct covered include, among other things: Excessive Force; Discriminatory Harassment; False Arrest; Coercive Sexual Conduct; Unlawful Stops, Searches, or Arrests.

Notice: This is not legal advice but is for educational purposes only. "Study to show thyself approved, a workmen that need not be ashamed." 2nd Timothy 2:15

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Our Website to see pass issues and the latest as well: google: the.wewa.news

Note: Thanks to all that assist in the process of creating The Wewa News®™, from family, friends, David at Ramsey's Printing and my proofreaders, as well as those that sponsor this work. Praise the Lord for you, a true blessing to me and Wewa.



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INFORMATIONAL NOTICES

The Wewa News is a locally owned and operated local 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.

Notice: The Wewa News operates in the Private, freedom of speech and of the Press are fundamental to our effort of expression, as well as God given rights as men and women on the land called Florida. The publishing day is the 7th of the month, unless notified otherwise.

Up Coming Events and Other: Mark Your Calendars

The Local Bee Association meets at 6pm in the Gulf County Extension Agents meeting room on the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm.

The Friends of the Wewa Library's meet at the Wewa Library on the 2nd Thursday of each month, 9:30 AM. Come early and meet and greet with us in the conference room. Note: July meeting has been canceled.

Wewahitchka Historical Society meets every month on the Third Thursday at 6pm at the old Corner Café' building.

City Hall Meetings: The City meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month sharply at 6PM CT, unless posted otherwise.

HEY U.S. SERVICE CONNECTED VETS, RETIREES AND ACTIVE DUTY, HERE IS A WEBSITE YOU CAN GO TO FOR A LITTLE R&R, CHECK IT OUT:

<https://www.afvclub.com/>