

TUPELO COUNTRY NEWS™



THE WEWA NEWS™



“The Good News Newspaper”

SPECIAL ADDITION 2024 >> No. 02-02<< A FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER Take One!

CITY MAYOR HAS SHOULDER SURGRY-RECOVERING AT HOME

by Tom Wynn

On January 30th, Mayor Phillip Gaskin underwent the knife to repair his painful shoulder. As the city of Wewa continues to pray for his complete recovery of the use of his shoulder and arm, well-wishers may send get-well cards to City Hall. City Manager, Michael Gortman said he would be glad to take the cards and notes to the mayor as he recovers at home.

Mayor Gaskin has been our mayor for the past 25 years and has done us all a great service keeping our small but loving city above board financially and conditionally.

He was instrumental along with our City Commissioners in getting our money back for the completion of our unfinished Fire Station and a grant from the State of Florida for a new City Hall.

Mayor, please enjoy your time off, and get well very soon. Thank you for your service to our community all these years.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MS. VERA AND MS. ERA!

by Tom Wynn

On Thursday, the 8th of February, Mrs. Vera Rozier and Mrs. Era Luckie Daniell of Wewahitchka and Port St. Joe (Gulf County Florida) respectively, will Celebrate their 100th birthday at the Wewahitchka Senior Citizen Center behind the Old Court House and City Library. Please come join us if you are in the local area to celebrate these beautiful ladies with their families and friends. The Festivities will begin at approximately 11 am, come celebrate with us. It will be a happy day for all that come.

(see page 6 to continue story)

“FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY” AND “THE WEWAHITCHKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY” GIVE A REPORT TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THE END OF THE YEAR 2023

by Tom Wynn

“The Friends of the Library” and “The Wewahitchka Historical Society” gave a glowing report to the city commission during the public time to speak. The Friends of The Library reported numbers of folks utilizing the library which have greatly increased. Ann Johnson reported that the Wewahitchka Historical Society is working toward the restoration of the old county courthouse. She also reported on the efforts of cleaning up and finding our old cemeteries in Iola; as well as many other activities our community in the north end of the Gulf County are doing.

During the meeting the city council voted to give the Friends of the Library a donation of \$500. Mary Jones, the Friends of the Library representative, gave a list of accomplishments of the group and the Librarians over the past year. The latest update of the Friends of The Library for the end of the year is on page 8 of this edition.

(see page 7 and 8 to continue story)

THE WEWA NEWS-WHAT IS HAPPENING?

by Tom Wynn

As I am not growing any younger and so my body is finding it harder and harder to continue the Wewa News as a monthly newspaper, as most of you know me, the success of this good news newspaper was too much for one man, as is.

My family and I have decided we would make it a periodical Good News Newspaper, so this is the first example of that effort. We have made it our mission to help get the community to come together in all sorts of ways, and bring Gulf County to thinking as a family once again as it used to be, helping one another to make it a better place to live and enjoy life, after all this is “God’s Country” as expressed by the Spaniards, when they arrived in Florida back in the 1500’s. Besides them, my Grandparents and Parents all agree, Wewa is the best place to call home.



GULF COUNTY CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION IN 2025

by Tom Wynn

In 2025, Gulf County and the Old Court House in Wewa will be 100 years old. It is time for Gulf County Florida to celebrate these events now, today. The Friends of the Library and The Wewahitchka Historical Society is gathering historical photographs, high school yearbooks, and artifacts, as part of the 2025 Gulf County Centennial Celebration.

Wewahitchka Historical Society is working hard to preserve our local and Florida history before progress causes it to disappear. Our Friends of the Library have worked so hard to make the Public Library a place to enjoy history, books, and programs.

Our Librarians have done a wonderful job to bring folks into a place of learning. I love to go into the library to see the history sections and admire the historical artifacts on display. God is Good and he is good to us in Wewa.

We are a blessed city so let's take a breath and enjoy what we have now, before all goes away, and we wish we could go out more to see the beauty of this place and take in our beautiful city, lakes and countryside.

The Wewa News will remain online for those that want to read or re-read back issues. Also, I am thinking of doing a Historical Periodical later this year as I did last year for The Friends of the Library, as a fundraiser. I will give you notice on the local Facebook pages and on The Wewa News website when I write more history stories etc.

Please contact the Library to share historical information for the centennial. **TW**

IN CASE YOU DIDN'T KNOW...you are reading a free local newspaper, which exercises any and all rights given by The Most High and supported by the community we call, these United States of America, The United States Inc., The U.S. Constitution and the three bodies of government in their various institutions as protectors of our rights and privileges of "We The People". We all stand in unity to protect one another from domestic and foreign governments and individuals that may infringe upon our eternal rights as children of the Most High, as contractually given by the author of, "The Holy Bible."—**The Editor**

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Proverbs 3:21

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THE WEWA LIBRARY

The History of Our Modern

Local Library

by Joyelle Linton



The Wewahitchka Library was housed for many years in the cramped, hard to locate 750 square foot room at the old Gulf County Courthouse, across the street from us today.

This room was previously used as the clerk's office. On February 7, 2000, it was mentioned in the Gulf County Breeze that a citizens group approached the City of Wewahitchka Commissioners to help with getting a new 3,000 to 3,500 square foot city library.

Before long, this dream was to become a reality. Heading up this project, and often referred to as "the dreamers", was Allen McNair and his wife Marlene.

A building committee was developed, and things started to move right along. The City of Wewahitchka provided the land and Jamie Lester appraised the land at \$128,000, which was half the required amount needed if they were to get their \$256,000 matching grant from the state of Florida.

Their first donation of \$1,000 came from the Friends of the Gulf County Library. Max and Rosenia Kilbourn gave \$10,000 which was the encouragement for other donations. The Library is named after Charles Whitehead, who was the largest donor. Designed by local architect Charles Gaskin, the structure was to be similar to the Gulf County Courthouse. Local contractor, Ralph Fisher, completed the contract to build the new city library. The grand opening for the new Wewahitchka Public Library was held on January 26, 2003, followed by a ribbon cutting ceremony on April 25, 2003.

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

If you were put on trial for being a Christian, would there be enough evidence to find you guilty?

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THE TAYLOR'S

by Tom Wynn

It is believed that the history of the family name "Taylor" goes back to the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. At that time, one Taliaferro was honored by William the Conqueror. His descendants were given lands in Kent, which is in southern England, and near Carlisle, in northern England.

Many people living in the United States with the "Taylor" surname are descended from Rowland Taylor. These descendants include Zachary Taylor, the twelfth president of the United States. Rowland Taylor was martyred; that is, he was executed for his beliefs in 1555. It is ironic that he was executed for being a Christian in "Christian" England. This was during the time of Queen Mary (Bloody Mary). A full account of the martyrdom of Rowland Taylor is available in Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Rowland Taylor was born in 1510 in Rothbury, Northumberland, England. He married Margaret "of the house of Tyndale". Whether she was related to John Tyndale who was martyred for translating the Bible into English is unclear.

Dr. Taylor's parish was St. Mary's, in a village named Hadleigh in Suffolk. This parish was known as a "peculiar" because Dr. Taylor reported directly to the Archbishop of Canterbury. At the time, Hadleigh was a well-to-do woolmarket town. When the writer first visited England, he was pleased to even find the town of Hadleigh. Being American, where anything over forty years old is bulldozed to make way for a parking lot, he was surprised to find that the church, St. Mary's, still exists. In addition, the front portion of the rectory still stands as well as the Hadleigh Guildhall adjacent to the church. The portion of the rectory remaining was the gatehouse of a much larger residence. The guildhall was built in the 1400's. Just outside of town, at Aldham Commons, is a monument marking the spot where Rowland Taylor was martyred.

Dr. Taylor was imprisoned in London for more than a year. As he was being escorted back to Hadleigh for his execution, he was held overnight in the basement of the

Guildhall of Corpus Christi in Lavenham. Lavenham is another Suffolk woolmarket town. When the English broadcloth market collapsed, prosperity left Lavenham. As a result, the village is much the same today as it was in the 1500's.

Another Taylor lived in Lavenham and became famous for her composition of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", the beloved childhood song. Jane Taylor lived on Shilling Street in Lavenham, and while looking out of a small window in the garret of her house composed the first verse of the famous poem. It is probable, but not confirmed, that Jane Taylor was related to Rowland Taylor. To see a painting of Jane Taylor found in the National Portrait Gallery in London, England please see.

On the way from Lavenham to Hadleigh, it is quite possible the sheriff and soldiers guarding Dr. Taylor went through Kersey. A beautiful village with thatched-roofed cottages, visiting Kersey is like stepping back in time. A small creek branch flows across the road at the bottom of the hill in Kersey, creating what the residents call a "water splash".

Inside St. Mary's church in Hadleigh is a chapel honoring the memory of Rowland Taylor. There is a stained-glass window depicting his trial and martyrdom. In the chapel is an ancient bronze plaque commemorating the death of Dr. Taylor. Also, there is a beautiful modern stained-glass window in another part of this 13th Century church.

Some of Dr. Taylor's descendants are buried in the churchyard at St. Mary's. Some of them came to America in the early 1600's. His descendants and relations include several presidents of the United States, the Lee family of Virginia, Jefferson Davis, president of the Confederate States of America, and Dr. Guy Baker Taylor, the inventor of "Nylon" (a registered trade-mark of the DuPont company). **TW**

Hebrews 9:14



The Birth of Gulf County, Florida: A New Beginning

By Tom Wynn

In the early 1920s, a significant event unfolded in the northern region of Florida, leading to the creation of Gulf County. It all began with the construction of a brand-new county courthouse in Wewahitchka, Florida, marking the birth of a new county and a fresh start for the community.

The decision to build the county courthouse in Wewahitchka was pivotal. As the northern end of the new county, Wewahitchka was chosen as the county seat, becoming the hub of governmental activities and legal proceedings for the region. This decision brought a sense of pride and excitement to the residents, who eagerly anticipated the development and growth that would follow.

However, the establishment of Gulf County was not without its challenges. Prior to its creation, the area was part of Calhoun County, and there were financial obligations that needed to be addressed. To facilitate the formation of Gulf County, the voters agreed to pay off a little over 42 percent of Calhoun County's debts as a goodwill gesture. This gesture showed unity and cooperation among the residents, paving the way for a smooth transition to independence.

The name "Gulf County" was carefully chosen, paying homage to the majestic Gulf of Mexico that bordered the region. The name reflected the county's close connection to the gulf waters, which played a vital role in shaping the local economy and culture.

With the establishment of Gulf County, a new chapter began for the residents of Wewahitchka and the surrounding areas. The county courthouse served as a symbol of progress and opportunity, providing a central location for legal proceedings, governance, and community gatherings.

In 1965, the county seat was moved to Port St. Joe, about 20 miles south of Wewahitchka, making the old courthouse an annex for county business. This move saved gasoline and time for the citizens living in the north end of the county.



Coming soon in 2025, Gulf County will celebrate its 100th anniversary of its creation. The old Gulf County courthouse is still standing in downtown Wewahitchka, with county citizens eagerly awaiting its restoration. Plans are underway to transform the old courthouse into a history museum, gift shops, and a host of other income-producing businesses for the local Gulf County community. The people of Gulf County love the old building and are looking to have it restored to its former glory or better. Time will tell.

In front of the old courthouse is a monument to all our military services rejected in 2002 and designed by this author at the request of the local chapter of the VFW. It turned out so beautiful, come by and see our magnificent old courthouse and monument to the greatest military in the world.

The Wewahitchka Historical Society, other organizations, and the Gulf County Commissioners, request local citizens to write letters of support for the restoration of the 100-year-old courthouse structure. They hope to obtain a restoration grant from the State. Please write letters of support to the county commissioners, expressing your desire to see the historic courthouse restored to its former glory. **TW**

Ms. Era and Ms. Vera Celebrating their 100th Birthday on the 8th of February in Wewahitchka Florida

by Tom Wynn

Twin sisters Ms. Era and MS Vera, born on February 8th, 1924, in a cozy log cabin in Alabama, weighed only 1 pound and 1.5 pounds at birth. The attending doctor held them in his arms in front of a warm log fireplace in the cabin they were born in to keep them cozy and safe, ensuring their survival from the very beginning.

Growing up in Alabama, Miss Era and Miss Vera were known for their adventurous spirits and kind hearts. From a young age, they were inseparable, sharing not only their birthdays but also their dreams and aspirations. They attended the local school together, excelling in their studies with a passion for history and literature.

In their mid-life, Ms. Era and Ms. Vera made the bold decision to move to Gulf County, Florida, seeking new adventures and opportunities. Despite leaving behind the familiar comforts of Pensacola, they embraced their new home with open arms, immersing themselves in the vibrant community and making lifelong friends along the way. **TW**



1. Vera Herring in Awin, Wilcox County, Alabama about 1941
2. Vera Herring married Malcolm Rozier on October 26, 1946 in Alabama and moved to Warrington, Escambia County, Florida.
3. Vera and Malcolm Rozier in 1984. Malcolm died on December 14, 1985.

Vera and her husband in the prime of their lives



1. Era (left) and Vera at Buddy Gay's birthday party in Wewa 2012
2. Era and Gene Luckie 1957 at old Fish Hatchery
3. Vera and Era about 1944 Awin, Alabama
4. Era and Vera about 1945 Awin, AL : A suitor wrote: "This one is mine. Ha, Ha I hope!" hoping he could tell them apart.
5. Era and family 1957 Wewa at old Fish Hatchery
6. Younger sister Mary Ethel Luckie abt 1944 Awin, AL, She married Bernard Luckie about 1948
7. Vera styling Jo Patterson's hair in her beauty shop on hwy 77 abt 2012
8. Vera cutting grandson's hair in her beauty shop about 2013
9. Era at Port St. Joe Garden Club Flower Show about 2013
10. Vera cut her own yard until about age 94
11. Vera and Era in Port St. Joe about age 90
12. Vera and Era at community wide 90th birthday party at First Baptist Church Family Life Center February 8, 2014
13. Era and Vera at 90th birthday party with their children

Etymology of name Era

era (n.)

1716, earlier *aera* (1610s), from Late Latin *aera, era* "an *era* or epoch from which time is reckoned" (7c.), probably identical with Latin *aera* "counters used for calculation," plural of *aes* (genitive *aeris*) "brass, copper, money" (see ore, also compare copper). The Latin word's use in chronology said to have begun in 5c. Spain (where the local *era, aera Hispanica*, began 38 B.C.E.; some say because of a tax levied that year). Other ancient eras included the Chaldean (autumn of 311 B.C.E.), the Era of Actium (31 B.C.E.), of Antioch (49 B.C.E.), of Tyre (126 B.C.E.), the Olympiad (July 1, 776 B.C.E.) and the Seleucidan (autumn 312 B.C.E.). In English it originally meant "the starting point of an age" (compare epoch); meaning "system of chronological notation" is from 1640s; that of "historical period" is from 1741.



Etymology of The Name Vera

fem. proper name, from Latin, literally "true" (see very).

Entries linking to Vera very (adj.)

late 13c., *verray* "true, real, genuine," later "actual, sheer" (late 14c.), from Anglo-French *verrai*, Old French *verai* "true, truthful, sincere; right, just, legal," from Vulgar Latin **veracus*, from Latin *verax* (genitive *veracis*) "truthful," from *verus* "true" (source also of Italian *vero*), from PIE root **were-o-* "true, trustworthy." Meaning "greatly, extremely" is first recorded mid-15c. Used as a pure intensive since Middle English.

"Let all you do be done in LOVE" Grandpa Tom



Last year Birthday Party 99 years old, a joyful day for the Ladies and the County! TW

Wewahitchka Historical Society, Inc
<https://wewahistory.org/>

"EXCITING THINGS WE ARE DOING"

Field Trips:

- Visited old saw/grist mill at Stone Mill Creek on Domino Demunck's property.
- Archaeological "Dig", at Whispering Pines Subdivision, searching for parts from the P-36 World War II plan that crashed during a training mission by a Chinese pilot. We did find some small pieces of the plane.
- Tour site of the Old lola Cemetery to assess the damage caused by the timber company and see if we could

find any markers. None were found but will continue searching and more research.

- Placed a handmade wooden marker made by Tom Godwin and Stuart Resmondo at the marked site of the Old lola Cemetery. Also, searching for the site of the black cemetery in lola.
- Several Members of the Society viewed the inside the old Gulf County Courthouse before it was closed off to the public.

Fundraising Projects:

- Several successful yard sales.
- Sales of beautiful 2021 and 2022 afghans with old, local pictures on them.
- Pictures of the Dead Lakes in hand-made frames by Stuart Resmondo.
- Artifact sales from donated items along with pamphlets and postcards on local history.

Community Outreach and Local Events:

- Set up booths at the Tupelo Festival and Fall Festival to bring awareness to our local history.
- Participated in the Local History Day at the Wewahitchka Library.
- Work closely in support of the Wewahitchka Library and Friends of the Library with projects and presentations.
- Our group cleaned bricks on the over 100-year-old First Presbyterian Church which was part of the support structure under the church.
- Cleaned bricks from the Historic Old City Hall Building in Wewahitchka. The old bricks will be used to build a flower bed at the site of the new fire station around the flagpole.
- Worked with the LG2 group to help document Buildings, Structures and Cemeteries in North Gulf County for their state report.
- Took classes on cemetery laws and clean-up on cemeteries. Cleaned gravestones and markers at Jehu Cemetery.
- Work closely with organizations such as the Florida Public Archeology Network at the University of West Florida, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and

the Historical Cemetery Preservation of Northwest Florida.

- Dedication Services for 5 Veterans: 4 Civil War and 1 Spanish American War. The Sons of Confederate Veterans researched and applied for Memorial Markers for the Veterans, 2 at Jehu Cemetery, 2 at Iola Cemetery and 1 at Roberts Cemetery.

Upcoming Events and Projects:

- Updating all local cemetery maps.
 - School presentation for students about local history.
 - A Time Capsule will be placed in the flower bed at the new fire house where the old City Hall used to be.
 - Continue research on local history: Doolittle Raider Camp, Indian Massacre, Iola History, etc.
 - Historic Cemetery Tour of local cemeteries (fundraiser)
 - Composing notebooks with information on historical events to be shared with the community and library.
 - Fundraisers for scholarships.
- Fundraisers for Memorial and Historic Markers for historic sites identified in the local area.

The Friends of the Wewahitchka Library, Inc.

Reflections of 2023

Sharing the growth and success of the Charles Whitehead Public Library with Branch Manager Joyelle Linton, her staff and the assistance of Library Coordinator, Mimi Minnick, our library patrons and Friends of the Library members have entered 2024 with many events and accomplishments:

- 66 Children's Library Programs reaching 1,055 Children in our community
- 23 Community Outreach Visits reaching 298 children and adults
- Hosted the 3rd Annual Cookies with Santa and Mrs. Claus program with 108 children and parents

- 25 Adult Presentations reaching 141 members of our community
- 18 Family Programs with 259 attendees
- Be A Reader 1000 Books Before Kindergarten enrolled 61 children
- 17% increase in borrowed items and 19% increase in patron visits
- 22% increase in library cardholders
- Two Young Adult Programs with 20 attendees
- Complimentary Notary Services for 130 local citizens
- 20 Community and School Mobile Library visits to 188 students and adults
- Provided 1124 seed packets to 254 library patrons through our Seed Library
- Friends added funding for weekly janitorial services to our library
- Continued access to the Gulf County Breeze through the University of Florida
- Continued scanning historical pictures for the 2025 Gulf County Centennial
- Displayed local historical artifacts loaned by local citizens
- Maintained our native garden landscape
- \$1200 received from the Pilcrow Grant Children's Book Project
- \$6,000 received for children's books from the Early Learning Coalition
- [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) subscription renewed by Friends for library patrons.
- Hosted a booth at the Tupelo Festival and Fall Festival.
- Friends provided volunteers and food for library programs
- Fundraisers include three Bingo events and a yard sale
- Sold t-shirts, ornaments, tote bags and historical newspapers
- Purchased furniture, subscriptions, supplies, crafts and books for the library
- Funded by a grant from the IRS coordinated with the United Way of Northwest Florida, Friends of the Library volunteered as tax preparers and greeters for the second Volunteer Income Tax

Assistance Program hosted by our local libraries in Port St. Joe and

Wewahitchka. Results included:

- 252 tax returns filed at no cost to the taxpayer
- > \$167,222 Tax refunds received by residents
- \$9.1 million total Adjusted Gross Income
- 21 Days and 126 volunteer hours logged at the Wewahitchka Library

talking to a local fellow who was a county commissioner at one time about saving the old courthouse and the history of it. He mentioned that the inmates who were black were put on the bottom floor of the jail (under the jail). Seems no one had anything much to say about the discrimination of it at the time. Other than it was the hottest place there in the summertime.

Other than that, there used to be a bullet hole on the wall to the right as you come through the double doors. Seems someone was not all that satisfied with the judge's ruling at the time. I don't remember the guy's name. My dad told me as we went into the tax collector's office to get a tag for his truck.

The Wewahitchka Historical Society is always after the county commission to save the place from being torn down and forgotten about. We need to remember our history in order to either appreciate it and/or improve it. You know having a starting place to know to make or not make the same decisions, or mistakes all over again.

Respectfully Submitted, James E. Rish



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THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL GULF COUNTY COURT HOUSE

by James E. Rish

My father, James Frank Rish Jr. and I was driving by the old Gulf County Court house in Wewahitchka one day, when he told me that the courthouse was built back in 1925-26 and that the Foreman was my grandfather, James Frank Rish Sr. He is also the same fellow who built the old white wood frame house (1916) at the corner of 2nd street and Lake Grove Rd. He also built the old Rish honey house (1902) both structures are still standing today.

When I was a boy, we had a black fellow named Mexico McNeilly come work for us. He lived on Hwy. 22 near the old Creamer store. He was also a minister.

The reason that he comes to mind is that his wife was the cook for the jail. Once when we were taking a break at the bee yard for lunch, my dad asked him, "Mexico what do they serve those inmates for lunch at the county jail?" He said, "Well Sir, one day it is collard greens and corn bread, then the next day it is corn bread and collard greens!". In addition, when



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1 Peter 3: 15-16

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happens!"*

HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY

VERA AND ERA from the

Wewahitchka Woman's Club!



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of Old Wewa. Contract Ann Johnson THE WEWA
HISTORICAL Society--(850) 867-5970

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YOU WILL ENJOY: MESSIAH:2030
I highly recommend it to watch and share. It was well
done and is based on a book written in 2002. Check it
out!

EPHESIANS 3:14-19

NOTICE

In Port St. Joe. Free Food. Person to Contact:

Amy Rogers, Program Coordinator
gcucdci@fairpoint.net
Office number: (850) 229-1551
Fax number: (850) 229-1556

CALL 911 in Case of All Emergencies

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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 of The Wewa News will be a periodical as of 1 January 2024 until further notice. We will notify the public via word of mouth and via Facebook pages.

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, but is subject to change, we are growing fast.

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.

Wewahitchka Historical Society meets every month on the Third Thursday at 6pm at the Presbyterian Church in Hwy 71.

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

Please call our Sponsors and thank them for this FREE newspaper, they help make possible.



Check out our new website: myWEWA.org
Created for you by Aaron Wynn