



Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

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October, 2021

The President Presiding...

By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS

Covid Strikes Again! Here we go again with another issue -- Covid 2.0 Delta variant with the Lambda variant close behind. Before long we will be familiar with the entire Greek alphabet.

We had to cancel the August Wine Tasting. Hopefully we will be able to hold it later when conditions are safer. Yes, I know, alcohol kills germs but we don't know about viruses.

We weren't able to have the September General Membership Meeting and have to officially cancel the October Members Meeting due to the latest State of Louisiana mandate requiring masks indoors.

When will we get to meet again? I guess by the time that happens we will have to introduce ourselves to each other. "What is your name, again? You look familiar." Thank goodness for name tags!

- Our Complex fared well during Hurricane Ida with only one tree down and other minor damage. Most of the repairs have already been completed under the direction of Judy LeBlanc. Thank you to Kyle Douglas for his volunteer effort in removing the tree that fell on the Ignatius House.



Hurricane Ida blew down one tree and did minor window damage at the Museum Complex.

- GHS is sponsoring a bingo game where all proceeds will benefit aid for Lafitte, which is suffering from Hurricane Ida damage. This bingo will occur on Friday, Oct. 1, during our regular 3 p.m. game at Gretna Bingo Palace. It would be great for members to go and enjoy bingo while helping a very good cause.



- Monica Naquin and Judy LeBlanc, along with Paul Coles, Peter Debrock and myself helped prepare and serve 1,500 meals for the people in Lafitte/ Baratavia on Fridays.

- All our current projects are proceeding as planned.
See Page 2 for more of "The President Presiding"



**WELCOME TO OUR
NEW MEMBER ...**
Jeannie Radosta

The President Presiding... (continued from Page 1)

By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS President

- Chelle Koster Walton, a travel writer, recently toured our complex and several other historical sites in Gretna. Accompanying her were Charlene Hale, Director of Leisure and Partner Sales for the Jefferson Parish Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Summer Cook, Gretna's Special Events Coordinator. Tour guides Linda Laborde, Judy LeBlanc and I gave them an extensive and detailed tour of the complex that lasted over an hour. They asked many questions.

Ms. Hale had no idea of the historical significance of the Complex. To say she was impressed would be an understatement. She plans to promote our museum and other historic sites in Gretna in her Jefferson Parish publication.

Best of all, she is recommending our Louisiana State Fire Museum be placed on the agenda for the National Fire Conference, which will be meeting in Kenner this year. WOW! Wouldn't that be great! What fantastic exposure for the GHS.

- GHS will participate in the **Chili Cookoff on the River 2021** on Oct. 30 by entering its award-winning team! All proceeds from this year's Chili Cookoff will be equally shared by Lafitte Disaster Relief and St. Joseph Restoration.

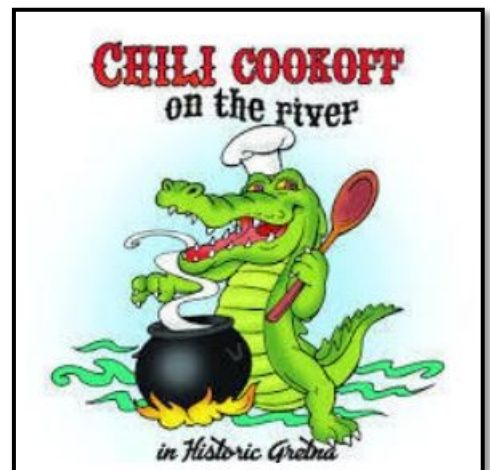
Entry is \$10 per person. Advance Tickets are also \$10, available at all Gulf Coast Bank Westbank locations and at the St. Joseph Church office. And a Bonus! -- Advance Tickets go into a FREE drawing for prizes to be drawn at 2:30 p.m. at the Cookoff. The winner must be present to win.

There is a special raffle being offered by the Chili Cookoff group. Five prizes will be drawn -- one \$5,000 prize and four \$500 prizes for a ticket price of \$50 each. Winners will be drawn at 2:30 p.m. at the Chili Cookoff and the winners need NOT be present to win.

This annual Chili Cookoff Raffle very much augments the proceeds of the event. Some people choose to split the cost with a friend and split their potential winnings. Tickets are available at St. Joseph Church, 610 Sixth St. in Gretna. Call Linda LaBorde at 504.458.6562 for details or to purchase tickets.



Taking a special tour of the Museum Complex are, from left, Sylvia Schwarz, GHS president; Charlene Hale from Jefferson Parish; travel writer Chelle Koster Walton; Summer Cook of the City of Gretna; and tour guides Judy LeBlanc and Linda LaBorde.



Times Past — By Stephanie Dieterich

Ida Digs Up the Past

As Hurricane Ida came blowing through Gretna on Aug. 29, Cherie Eues, my neighbor called and said, “Your tree appears to be moving.” It looked fine at first and then I did notice it swaying. My husband, Lou, said I was crazy that all trees sway in the wind. A few minutes later the beautiful Oak tree we planted 35 years ago was laying on its side taking some of the front of our house with it. The tree ironically fell directly across from the sign declaring the area “Tree City USA.”

My childhood home was a few houses down, on the corner of Huey P. Long and 10th Street. I had always admired the circa 1939 Richard family home on the same block. Mr. Richard was a pharmacist who co-owned the Richard and Vicknair Pharmacy, located where Huey P’s Pizzeria is today.

Most of the older homes in Gretna were known as the names of their owners. My home is the Richard home. Our mayor lives in the Samuel home, some others on the street are the Weigel, White, Dauenhauer, Schneider and Mel Ott homes. Mel didn’t actually live there, but he bought the house for his parents.

Growing up in Gretna there wasn’t Old Gretna, just Gretna. If you lived in a newer neighborhood it may have been Garden Park. As a child I had the impression that was where the wealthy people lived. That area is now called Old Garden Park since the newer section expanded across the expressway.

Our home for the first 10 years of marriage was in Old Garden Park. When my mom told me Mr. Richard was selling his home, I excitedly knocked on his door. My parents still lived on the block as did most of the older residents, however Old Gretna had been declining and my husband thought moving here was not a good idea. I have to say he was wrong, the neighborhood didn’t turn out to be a bad investment after all!

One weekend at my Uncle Nolan’s camp at Lake Hermitage, while looking at his photo album, I saw a vintage photo of my house. I asked why he had it and he said it once belonged to his late wife, Aunt Lutie, who always loved the house. I was raised where all of my parent’s friends were Miss or Mr. (first name) and really good friends were called Aunt and Uncle (first name). Such was the case of my Uncle Nolan and Aunt Lutie Pittman.

I knew from a very old aerial photo that a shotgun house was once located on the side yard of our home. The address was displayed on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. On the 1930 census, I discovered the Perrin family had lived at 929 Copernicus, now Huey P. Long Avenue. The Perrin daughters were my Aunt Lutie and her sister Dot.

When Ida uprooted our oak tree it exposed two rows of brick foundation piers from that shotgun home, the clay sewer pipe, as well as three very old bottles, a porcelain door knob and some shards of china. It’s very likely the items once belonged to the Perrin family.

My Uncle Nolan’s camp is still in use today, jointly owned by his real blood nephew, Jack Currault, the son of Dot Perrin and Judge Nestor Currault, and my husband, Lou. It’s a really small world! All of those old timers are gone now, but will never be forgotten.

Among the 1938 Gretna High School volleyball players were Dot Perrin, circled at left, and Lorraine (Lutie) Perrin, circled at right. (Times-Picayune photo) →



Hurricane Ida falls an old oak on Huey P. Long Avenue and brings up memories.



The uprooted tree exposed these old “treasures.”



Gretna Chronicles succeeds the GHS Newsletter and the Gretna Historical Society Newsletter as the official source of news for the general membership of the Gretna Historical Society.

Gretna Historical Society

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Gretna Historical Society Museum Complex

1840s Strehle Family Cottage, 1859 David Crockett
Volunteer Fire Co. No. 1 Fire Station (now Louisiana Fire
Museum), 1840s White Family Cottage

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ABOUT THE GHS AND HOW TO JOIN

The Gretna Historical Society was founded in Gretna, Louisiana, in 1969, by Lloyd E. Gomez (insurance man, volunteer firefighter, and community activist), who descended from Gretna pioneers, German immigrants Claudius and Catherine Nuss Strehle. The Society's articles of incorporation were drafted by Gretna attorney Everette F. Gauthreaux and signed in his law office on October 26, 1969. Today, the GHS operates the Gretna Historical Society Museum Complex at the corner of Lafayette Street at Second. It consists of three 19th century Creole cottages, a blacksmith shop, and the Louisiana Fire Museum. The GHS also owns and maintains the caboose and train depot on Huey P. Long Avenue at Fourth Street.

There are no requirements for membership in the GHS, other than the timely payment of annual membership dues of \$20 per person. Monthly meetings are held at the St. Joseph's Auditorium at 7th and Newton Streets on the second Thursday of every month at 7:00 p.m. Guests and prospective members are always welcome to attend the meetings.

The society's newsletter, *Gretna Chronicles*, is published monthly and mailed or emailed to all members.

Gretna Chronicles

is published for the members and friends of the

Gretna Historical Society

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