



# Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

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June, 2022

## *The President Presiding...*

By Sylvia Schwarz, GHS President



If you did not join the 130+ GHS members who “pinched the tails and sucked the heads,” you missed a tremendous outing. Due to a threat of bad weather, our annual Crawfish Boil was moved to St. Joseph auditorium. But it did not diminish our spirits. The crawfish were tasty and the desserts delicious. An outstanding “atta boy” goes out to our membership for the plethora of desserts! WOW!

Thanks to all who helped with the setup, the cleanup and the serving. It takes a large group of dedicated volunteers to pull off each meeting. Please come join our number.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

The next General Membership Meeting will be on June 9 in the St Joseph Gym @ 7:00 p.m. Ira Hopkins' long awaited presentation of Gretna History will finally be heard. We have had to postpone his program numerous times. We look forward to another presentation. Chef Garland will prepare delicious food for all to enjoy.

### **REMINDER: Meetings are for members only or those joining that night!**

- The 2022 Cemetery Tour is set for October 15 where we will again enjoy hearing about those who have added to Gretna's history. Must purchase an advance ticket to attend. Tickets will be sold in September.
- The annual Gretna Prayer Dinner will be held on June 21. GHS sponsors tables of 8 each. Tickets are \$20. Contact Judy LeBlanc at the complex (504.362.3854) to join us at this event.
- St. Joseph Restoration will host a Spaghetti Dinner on July 17, serving 2 meatballs, spaghetti, salad & garlic bread for \$12. Take out or eat in. Desserts for \$1 each, Bread Pudding for \$2 each. Must have an advance ticket. Tickets will be sold at the June GHS meeting or St. Joseph Church!







**Welcome  
To Our  
New  
Members**

Geraldine Wendt  
Larry Hermann  
B.J. and Mary  
Courtney

Tommy and Sue Naquin  
Barbara DeSalvo Jimenez  
Cynthia Miller  
Jason Betts

**And To Rejoining Members**

Joyce Brown  
Judy Sullivan  
Christina South  
Noel Cieutat





***Times Past* — By Stephanie Dieterich**  
**Gretna High School, “Part 3”**

After the Gretna Junior High School fire in 1975, the students and faculty of the school were platooned to Livaudais Middle School in Terrytown. Eventually, Gretna Elementary No. 1 on Huey P. Long Avenue became the 7<sup>th</sup> grade center while the McDonogh 27 School on Virgil Street became the Gretna Middle School for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades.

There was discussion of the possibility of the former school site being acquired by the City Of Gretna to develop



The aborted subdivision plan along Huey P. Long.

as a park. Since the mammoth school building no longer stood in the way, Huey P. Long could then continue from the river through the site to the Westbank Expressway.

However, Jefferson Parish Public School System (JPPSS) Superintendent Lawrence J. Sisung said he had no intention of disposing of the site although there was no plan to rebuild the middle school at that location. The school system needed a larger site, but did not have the money to build. It was not until a much anticipated monumental half cent Capital Improvement Sales Tax was approved in 1980 that the new school plan moved forward.

In 1982 the City of Gretna and the JPPSS signed a Legal Act of Exchange. Approximately 10 acres of the Gretna City Park property on Gretna Boulevard was swapped for the site

of the former Gretna Junior High, its gymnasium at 10<sup>th</sup> and Weyer Streets and the 1.75 acre Fried Street playground. After almost 10 years, a new Gretna Jr. High School was finally built on Gretna Boulevard.

Gretna City Park originally contained over 200 acres that was largely donated to the city in 1930, intended as a recreational park. Because of this exchange, the property the city received automatically became park property with the same restrictions. The land can never be sold or used for private enterprise.

In 2001 talk of re-subdividing and allowing construction of single family homes on the old school site met with great opposition. The Gretna Historical Society really stepped up to the plate, to fight for keeping the land as the park it was legally intended to be!

The City created ordinance No. 3417 prohibiting commercial or residential development of any kind and providing that the land will always remain green space. This area is now Heritage Square, where sits Heritage Playground and Heritage House, the City’s Visitor Center.



The city’s Welcome Center at Huey P. Long Avenue and 11th Street.



Gretna Junior High School on Gretna Boulevard.

*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

### Gretna Chronicles

is published for the members and friends of GHS

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### Gretna Historical Society

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