



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana



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Barbie Comes to Gretna for the Christmas Show!



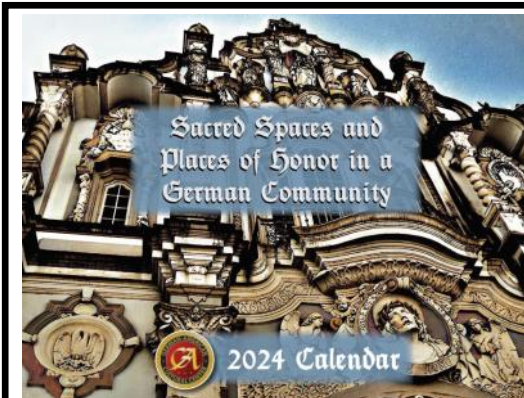
An Outstanding Christmas Show & Talented Cast



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:
Barbara Bieber, Norma Hastings, Louis Liljeberg, Frank & Gail Panepinto and Faith Peperone

WELCOME BACK:
Kevin & Bridget Avery and Don & Mary Ann Randon

2024 Dues are due now!



German Center's 2024 Calendar Features Historic Churches

Production of a yearly calendar with historic photographs is a tradition at the German-American Cultural Center in Gretna. The center's 2024 calendar features images of early churches founded by German immigrants, including Salem Lutheran and St. Joseph Catholic Churches in Gretna and Trinity Lutheran Church in Algiers. It also includes images of places of honor such as the Jefferson Memorial Arch and the burial places of Louis Oscar Fried and Melvin Ott. The calendars are available for a \$10 donation at the center, 519 Huey P. Long Avenue, or online, at gacc-nola.org.



Times Past — **By Stephanie Dieterich** ***50 Years Ago!***



During Christmastime in 1973, shopping for gifts or clothing might take you to Canal Street to admire the store windows and shop the likes of D.H. Holmes and numerous other stores. A larger-than-life Mr. Bingle appeared flying on the facade of Maison Blanche. You would have walked through the Roosevelt Hotel to see the decorations, and may have had lunch at Kolb's.

If you stayed closer to home, Maison Blanche at Stumpf's Westside Shopping Center was very popular as were many other stores located there. If you had a few filled S&H green stamp books, there was a store to redeem them. Options for getting a bite to eat included Stumpf's and Woolworth's lunch counters or the A&G Cafeteria. McKenzie's was the place for cakes, pies and desserts, where the bakery's older ladies in white dresses and hats helped you and rang up your order.

Across the not-yet elevated expressway was Oakwood. Still new and in its prime, this mall had it all -- loads of great stores to shop! Hausmann's was the go-to place for the "good jewelry."

Taking a break from shopping at the mall you might dine at the Royal Pub Restaurant or just grab a quick hot dog at the Orange Julius stand. K&B served the best hot fudge sundae at its lunch counter. Last-minute items could be purchased there as well. This drugstore sold many of their own purple label goods from cream cheese ice cream to whiskey and other alcohol. Only locals can identify K&B purple. Remember the song? "Look on every street corner and what do you see? A big purple sign that says friendly K&B."

Kids couldn't wait for the Sears toy catalog to arrive. They looked at every page, drooling over all of the choices. Sears was also the place to go for Kenmore appliances and Craftsman tools. Home Depot had not yet arrived. Cavaretta's was another local furniture and appliance store where many locals shopped.

Popular Christmas items included a 19-inch color television for around \$500. Black-and-white TVs were still sold and cable was a few years away. Microwaves were becoming more available as people grew less afraid of getting radiation poisoning from their use. The huge Amana Radarange also ran around \$500.

Walmart didn't exist here but there was Woolco, sort of a giant offshoot of Woolworth's. Decorations, household items and clothing were available at lower prices. Kirschman's Furniture Store was in the same parking lot as was the Westside Movie Theatre. *American Graffiti*, *The Exorcist* and *Serpico* were top movies of 1973.

If you were really, really good maybe Santa might bring you a new Corvette convertible from Leson Chevrolet's newly opened showroom, for only \$5,390! Who cared that it was a gas guzzler -- gasoline was 39 cents a gallon. However, during the oil crisis in 1973, gas prices skyrocketed to 55 cents per gallon. Ouch!

Picking up the fixings for Christmas dinner to feed 10 people cost a whopping \$11.09. Casey Jones, a favorite place to shop, was still on 5th Street, moving to Westside Shopping Center in 1974. If Casey's didn't have what you needed, Schwegmann's probably did. When your husband tagged along and didn't like to shop, he could sit at the bar and enjoy a few Schwegmann's beers. This gave you time to go next door to Grant's to pick up a few more items. To check on something at home, you had to walk outside to use the pay phone, unless you owned one of the first cell phones that made their debut in 1973. Motorola's original phone was the size of a brick and weighed 2.4 pounds; it took 10 hours to charge for only 30 minutes of talk time. The cost: \$3,995.

It's hard to believe that it's been 50 years since 1973. So many things have changed. All of the stores mentioned above are no longer around, but at least Mr. Bingle has now found a home at Dillard's!

CALENDAR

NOTICE: As of the month of January, all GHS meetings will be held at 6:00 p.m. every second Thursday of each month. Meetings had previously been held at 7:00 p.m. at St. Joseph Complex Gym and at 6:00 p.m. if the meetings were held in the GHS backyard. As of now, ALL meetings are scheduled at 6:00 p.m.

Jan 11 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym!
 Feb 8 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym!
 Feb 14 - Valentine's Day Weddings
 Mar 14 @ 6 pm Membership Meeting at St. Joseph Gym!

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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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 \$25 per person. Monthly meetings are held at the St. Joseph Complex Gym at 7th and Newton Streets on the second Thursday of every month at 6:00 p.m. The society's newsletter, *Gretna Chronicles*, is published monthly and mailed or emailed to all members.

Gretna Historical Society

<https://www.gretnahistoricalsociety.org/>

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- Lisa LaFrance.....President**
- Ray Markase.....Vice President**
- Sylvia Schwarz.....Recording Secretary**
- Holly Williams.....Corresponding Secretary**
- Sarah Daigle.....Treasurer**
- Stephanie Dieterich.....Historian and Archivist**
- Blaine Daigle.....Sergeant-at-Arms**
- Val Coles.....Parliamentarian**
- M. Helen Williams.....Board Member/Publicity**
- Paul Coles.....Board /Hospitality Director**
- Cheryl AmackerBoard Member/Membership**
- Monica Naquin.....Board Member at Large**
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