



# Gretna Chronicles

Gretna, Louisiana

Volume 33, Issue 11

An Official Publication of the Gretna Historical Society

November 2023

## A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION TO REMEMBER!

Every year at the October meeting, members celebrate the founding of Gretna Historical Society in 1969 by Lloyd E. Gomez who descended from the Strehles, Gretna pioneers. The society's articles of incorporation were drafted by Gretna attorney Everette F. Gauthreaux and signed on Oct. 26, 1969.

We also honor those members present at the meeting who are 85 and older. The honorees were seen having a grand old time in front of the large GHS birthday cake, left to right, Freda Hutchinson, Dirk Hepting, Judith Kleinpeter Lotz and the Rev. "Father Frank" Carabello.



### *Growing Up in Gretna!*

The October Meeting guest speakers were Jerry Daul and Joe Toomy, best friends forever who acted in unison to speak to the group about "Growing up in Gretna!" It was a commotion with members participating and laughing hysterically!

They are pictured, left to right, Jerry and Joe, in a most appropriate place for them to be standing!



## **Times Past —**

**By Stephanie Dieterich**

### **Jefferson Memorial Arch is 100!**

One of the most recognizable landmarks in Gretna is the Jefferson Memorial Arch that is located in Memorial Square. This impressive monument has proudly stood between the Mississippi River and Gretna Courthouse, greeting Gretna citizens and visitors for 100 years this November.

The dedication of the Arch was Armistice Day, Nov. 11, 1923. Armistice Day commemorated the signing of the armistice on Nov. 11, 1918 to end fighting between the Allied Forces and Germany during WWI. To honor all veterans, the first Veterans Day was celebrated in 1947. Armistice Day was officially changed to Veterans Day in 1954.

The spectacular event drew over 2,000 people, one of the largest crowds to assemble in Gretna. The Jefferson Memorial Arch, the Courthouse and surrounding buildings were all decorated for the event. Gretna Mayor Henry Viering gave the welcome address and speeches were given from Louisiana Governor John M. Parker, Jefferson Parish Sheriff Louis L. Dauenhauer and numerous dignitaries from around Louisiana. The Shriner's Jerusalem Temple Band held a two hour concert. The VFW, American Legion, Boy Scouts and school bands from the parish and the state participated



**This historic photo shows the dedication ceremony of Gretna's Jefferson Memorial Arch on November 11, 1923.**

in the events. Albert Samuel, chairman of the committee, made the dedication, after which a parade was held and refreshments were served.

Invitations to the event that went out to New Orleanians mentioned taking the Jackson Avenue ferry across the river where "Gretna residents would greet you with a smile."

The Memorial was erected by the people of Jefferson Parish with some jail labor used in its construction. The pressed red brick and concrete arch has pierced lettering atop, allowing for illumination.

The Arch was originality intended to honor sons and daughters of Jefferson Parish who gave the supreme sacrifice of their lives in the War of 1812, the Civil War and WWI. It evolved to include Jefferson Parish veterans who served in those wars as well as WWII. Marble plaques on both sides list those names. *(Continued on Page 3)*



**Members of Bayou Preservation work to refresh the names on Gretna's Jefferson Memorial Arch.**

## Jefferson Memorial Arch is 100!

(Continued from page 2)

Since time had taken its toll, the names on the plaques had become faded and unreadable. GHS recently hired Bayou Preservation to clean, complete the in-painting and apply a consolidant to restore each plaque. Thank you Sevilla Finley for bringing this important project to the attention of Val Coles who completed the task.

Of the six names on the Spanish American War plaque, all were Gretna residents. Five can be traced to the Gretna Historical Society and current members. Captain William White was Sevilla Finley's grandfather. Barbara White Cronin, who served as a nurse, was the sister of Lilly White Ruppel and lived in the family home on the GHS Complex. Albert G. Kerner is a relative of members Jo Ann Olson and Stephanie Dieterich. Peter L. Fisher is related to Stephanie Dieterich, as well, and the DNA of Corporal Robert Luther Maness runs through the veins of Board Member Val Coles. Her Great Grandfather Luther, as he was known, will be on this year's Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour that you might want to visit on Nov. 4!



## Nominations for Officers and Board Members

November is the month when GHS addresses officers and board of directors for the next year. There was a motion by the board to carry over nominations from 2023 to serve on the 2024 GHS Board. The decision was unanimous.

President - Lisa LaFrance

Vice President - Ray Markase

Recording Secretary - Sylvia Schwarz

Corresponding Secretary - Holly Williams

Treasurer - Sarah Daigle

Historian/Archivist - Stephanie Dieterich

Sergeant-at-Arms - Blaine Daigle

Parliamentarian - Val Coles

Board Member/Editor/Publicity - M. Helen Williams

Board Member/Membership - Cheryl Amacker

Board Member at Large - Monica Naquin

We currently have 12 board members. We are considering filling a vacant position. The following by-laws must be observed:

1. The name of any member in good standing may be placed in nomination for election to the Board of Directors by a petition of ten (10) members in good standing of this organization providing that member has given written acceptance of the nomination.
2. All nominating petitions must be filed with the Secretary of this organization at least ten days prior to the date of the election of Board members by the membership. If you are interested in serving on the GHS Board of Directors or in getting more involved in volunteering for events, monthly meetings or annual special events, please contact Lisa LaFrance 504-912-6718.

<b>Deceased Members 2022-2023 To Be Memorialized at Nov. 9 Meeting</b>	
Chris Ziifle	11/07/22
Rodney Camardelle	11/08/22
Sue McCletchie	7/22/23
Marceline Toups	7/29/23
Audrey Ezzo	9/04/23
Sam Krush	9/09/23

### Welcome

### New Members!

Anne Ledet  
Shirley Johnson

### CALENDAR

Nov 4 Annual GHS Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour! Ticketed event!

Nov 9 @ 7 pm Membership Memorial Meeting at St. Joseph Gym!

Dec 14 @ 7 pm Annual Christmas Production & Party!

Jan 11 @ 7 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**

201-209 Lafayette Street  
 P.O. Box 115  
 Gretna, LA 70054-0115



### **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

M. Helen Williams, Editor

To submit articles, call Helen at 504.450.8481

(or e-mail [mhw500@cox.net](mailto:mhw500@cox.net))

### **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'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.

## **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**
- Cheryl Amacker .....Board Member/Membership**
- Monica Naquin.....Board Member at Large**
- Judy LeBlanc.....Director of Facilities**