



Gretna Chronicles



Gretna, Louisiana

Volume 29, Issue 02

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February 2020

February 13 Meeting – 7 p.m.

Our next meeting will be the GHS Mardi Gras Party. We'll pick our Mardi Gras King and Queen and have lots of music and fun.

Garland Gaspard is preparing and serving Hot Dogs and Chili for our meeting meal.

Sarah Daigle will be bringing king cakes for dessert.

Spread the Love!

Please bring peanut butter, jelly, and crackers to the February 13 meeting.

The Gretna Food Bank is in need of shelf-stable food items for the hungry.

January Meeting Program



Newly elected president, Sylvia Schwarz, started our January General Membership meeting by introducing the 2020 GHS Board.

Special thanks to Chef Garland for preparing his famous Shrimp 'N Grits and to Ricky Livingston for keeping the libations flowing.

Ray Markase kept everyone entertained with a video presentation of the 2019 Hook & Ladder Cemetery Tour.

Upcoming Events - GHS Calendar - Save the Date

Thursday, February 13, 2020 Membership Meeting and Mardi Gras Party, 7 p.m. at St. Joseph's

Friday, February 14, 2019 Valentine Weddings at Blacksmith Shop, 8 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Thursday, March 12, 2020 Membership Meeting and Part II of Gretna Historic Photos, 7 p.m.

Sunday, April 5, 2020 Gretna Spring Tour of Homes, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Thursday, April 9, 2020 Membership Meeting and Guest Speaker, 7 p.m.

Thursday, May 14, 2020 Membership Meeting and Crawfish Boil, 7 p.m.

Times Past *by Stephanie Dieterich*



(Left to Right) Page George Trauth, King Lycester Trauth, Queen Katherine Spar and unknown page in the first Krewe of Grela ball
Photo Credit: George Trauth

On February 7, 1948, the Krewe of Grela staged the first carnival parade ever held in Jefferson Parish. The nine mule-drawn floats were decorated with different types of flowers to suit the “Floweramia” theme. The Saturday parade route started from the Gretna High School Auditorium, (now the Boys & Girls Club Westbank Unit) and paraded throughout Gretna.

First King Lycester “Ces” Trauth was presented with the “Key to the City” at the reviewing stand in front of City Hall where his Queen, Katherine Spahr (Kate Ward), Mayor Gelbke and many other city and parish dignitaries watched. The parade continued on to Monroe Street, disbanding at Columbus Street.

The flower theme continued at the Gala Ball held in the school auditorium that night as the costumed krewe wore assorted flowered attire.

King Trauth held court with his Queen and Maids, Mrs. Margaret Bauer, Mrs. Gertrude Marciante, Miss Gloria D’Angelo, Mrs. G. E. Hoffman, Misses Cora and Virginia Ribaul, Miss Mamie Jo DiMarco and Miss Bettie Boudreaux.

Ladies who served as “call-outs” for dances with the court as shown in the photo included, left to right, Louisa Trauth Abadie, Annie Trauth Hartnett, Barbara Smith Trauth, Lamie LeBlanc Blanchard, (Dick White,) Ethyl LeBlanc Trauth and Rose Betz.

Many of you may have had one of the Trauth sisters-in-law as teachers. Ethyl Trauth taught at Gretna Jr. High and Barbara Trauth taught at McDonogh 26 for many years.

Judge Lycester Trauth was probably best known for the 17,000 weddings that he performed after replacing his father, Judge George Trauth who was known as the “marrying magistrate of Jefferson Parish” for the 20,000 weddings that he performed from 1916 until his death in 1944.

In 1960, Grela was the first krewe to throw a doubloon, actually a wooden nickel, three days before Rex introduced the real doubloon. In 1984, Grela moved its parade day from Saturday to Shrove Tuesday. Crowds enjoyed Grela’s parades for over 60 years, with a final run in 2015.



Photo Credit: George Trauth

Blacksmith Shop Valentine Day Weddings 2020

The annual GHS Valentine's Day Weddings held in the Gretna Green Blacksmith Shop has our volunteers smiling throughout the day. Love is in the air as couples make commitments to each other in a romantic setting without breaking the bank!

Those married here on February 14 will forever have a romantic wedding anniversary to celebrate. Already married couples can also participate by having their wedding vows renewed at the event.

The 'marrying judge,' Vernon J. Wilty III, a Jefferson Parish Justice of the Peace legalizes all Blacksmith Shop weddings. Judge Wilty enjoys performing the rites and generously donates the fees he collects back to the GHS.

The weddings are scheduled from 9:30 a.m. until 4 p.m. A marriage license must be obtained and a call must be made in advance to Judge Wilty's office at 504.364.2760, weekdays 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Special certificates and proclamations are issued to celebrate the Valentine Day weddings that are not mass weddings, but each an individual ceremony.

After the rite, blacksmith Tommy Verret will seal the couple's promise on the anvil in the centuries-old tradition of Gretna Green Scotland, the city of Gretna's namesake. He will then toast the couple with the bubbly!

Runaway marriages began in 1754, when an Act was passed in England stating that if both parties to a marriage were not at least 21 years old, consent had to be given by the parents.

This led to "elopers" fleeing their angry parents to get married in Scotland. The first village they arrived at was Gretna Green. The blacksmith shop, the focal point of the village became the center of the marriage trade. The anvil thus became the symbol of runaway weddings, as not only were metals joined together on the heat of the fire, but couples were joined in marriage in the heat of the moment.

The GHS Valentine's Day Weddings is just one of the many special events hosted by the GHS Board and our great group of volunteers!

Lundi Gras Celebration

Join the City of Gretna in celebrating Lundi Gras along with Rockin' Dopsie Jr. and The Zydeco Twisters!

Monday, February 24, 2020 - 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.
at the Gretna Market Place

Huey P. Long Avenue between 3rd and 4th Street
FREE ADMISSION!

GACC Calendar

The German-American Cultural Center has released a 2020 calendar with photographs from the late 1800s to the early 1900s. This incredible collection of historic pictures is available at the GACC

519 Huey P. Long Ave. for a \$10 donation.
Get a copy while supplies last!

Cemetery Tour DVDs

DVDs of the 7th Annual Hook and Ladder Cemetery Tour are available at our next meeting for \$15 donations.

Your donations will go towards making improvements to the cemetery.

We also still have DVDs available from the previous year's Cemetery Tour.

GHS Dues

Annual dues of \$20 will be due starting in January. For some of our newer members who joined late last year, we have given you credit through this year.

Please mail payment to:
Gretna Historical Society
P.O. Box 115
Gretna, LA 70054-0115

Gretna Chronicles succeeds the GHS Newsletter and the Gretna Historical Society Newsletter as the official news source 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

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Gretna Chronicles

is published for the members and friends of the

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 articles of incorporation for the GHS 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 to all members.

- Sylvia Schwarz.....President
- James Rolf.....Vice-President
- Allison Livingston.....Recording Secretary
- Helen Williams.....Corresponding Secretary
- Sarah Daigle.....Treasurer
- Stephanie Dieterich.....Historian
- Monica Naquin.....Archivist
- Sue McLetchie.....Parliamentarian
- Judy LeBlanc.....Membership Chairman
- Holly Williams.....Sergeant-at-Arms
- Ray Markase.....Program Chairman
- Garland Gaspard1st Board Member-at-Large
- Chris Ziifle.....2nd Board Member-at-Large
- Terry Lacoste.....3rd Board Member-at-Large
- Dr. Mary Grace Curry.....Historian Emeritus
- Celeste Apostalo.....Publicity Chairman
- B.J. LeBlanc.....Building Chairman