



GERMAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER NEWSLETTER

A publication of the Friends of the GACC
519 Huey P. Long Ave., Gretna, LA 70053

March 2021
Issue

Future Looks Brighter — So We Hope to Start Meetings in July!

With Covid-19 numbers going down, and vaccine numbers going up, it's time to start planning for the return of our much-missed GACC meetings.

When the Board of Directors of the GACC met on March 9, the question of when to resume monthly socials was an important topic. Board President Barron Burmaster hopes that we can hold our first 2021 meeting in July.

Initial meetings may feature just snacks, desserts and beverages (German beer and wine, of course), in order to start off slowly and gauge how many members will be ready to attend social get-togethers.

At this point we aren't sure if a Maifest Beer Garden can take place. We are waiting for a decision on that festival from the City of Gretna. We are also unsure about the city's plans for the Gretna Heritage Festival.

However, we remain hopeful that our traditional Oktoberfest Beer Garden will be held on our 5th Street parking lot!



Everyone misses our monthly social events at the GACC. We hope to resume our meetings in July.

City of Gretna Recognizes Rosie Agee

Rosie Agee is one of those volunteers behind the scenes who are so vital to an organization like the GACC. At a Maifest or Oktoberfest celebration, or even at regular monthly meetings, you can usually find her in the kitchen, helping to bake pretzels or washing dishes.

But Rosie means much more to the citizens of Gretna, which is why she received a proclamation on March 10 from Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant and the City Council.

From regular volunteer work at the Gretna Food Bank to providing all kinds

of support for a grateful group of shut-ins and senior citizens, Rosie is often called an angel by those that she helps.

"I feel for people," she says. "If there's no one there to help them, I'll help as much as I can." (Continued on Page 2)



Rosie Agee, left, is honored with a proclamation from Gretna Mayor Belinda Constant on March 10.

REMINDER

**DON'T FORGET TO
PAY YOUR GACC
DUES FOR 2021!**

Well-Deserved Honor for Rosie Agee From the City of Gretna

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A longtime GACC member, Rosie's daily schedule is busy, taking friends to doctor and hospital appointments, picking up their medicine, doing grocery shopping, running errands and just taking time to visit with them. As the mayor's proclamation says, "Rosie is always there for Gretna's aged and health-compromised residents. She never says no or turns anyone away." She also has taken many for COVID-19 tests, and has had numerous tests herself, to ensure the safety of those around her.



Rosie has been a super angel for Ms. Chris Ziiffler's Backpack Project, putting together backpacks full of donated supplies and essentials and hand-delivering them across the area to needy homeless citizens.

← How does she keep up with her daily schedule of stops? By writing reminders on her hand. Her friends look forward to her knock on their doors and her signature greeting, "Yahoo!" By helping people, she says, "You feel great inside." Now the city's elected officials all "recognize Rosie Agee for the positive impact she has had on Gretna citizens."



Rosie Agee, right, and Pam Boudreaux are often in the GACC kitchen, baking pretzels for events and meetings.



More Photos of McDonoghville And Gretna Added to Museum

Six new displays with 28 additional historic photos are now on view at the GACC Museum, with topics "McDonoghville Memories," "Neighborhood Shopping," "Downtown Views" and "Ferrying the Trains." Be sure to stop by to see them and read about their history.

'Coming to America' Lectures Planned at Deutsches Haus

Make plans now to attend a new "Coming to America Lecture Series" being sponsored by Deutsches Haus, 1700 Moss St. in New Orleans. It will focus on "real people and their life adventures, triumphs and ultimately living the American dream."

Four events are on the schedule so far:

- **April 11** – "An Adoption Story – Searching for His German Roots," by Rhonda Roederer
- **May 9** – "They Came in Ships – Story of My Sicilian Grandparents Coming to New Orleans," by Sal Serio
- **June 13** – "German Coast Tricentennial," by Jay Schexnaydre
- **July 11** – "From Young Bavarian Widow to New Orleans Business Woman," by Bethany Bultman.

All sessions are held on the second Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. The lectures are free and open to the public. No reservations are required.



German immigrants arrive in the U.S. (Photo from the National Archives and Records Administration)

Another Historic German Grocery in Gretna: Wisser's

The northwest corner of Copernicus (Huey P. Long Avenue) and Fourth Street in Gretna has quite a colorful past. Today at the corner is the Gretna Tavern, but in the late 1800s, the corner was well known as the location of Wisser's German Grocery, Restaurant and Bar.

It was a meeting place for men in Gretna for decades, according to a newspaper article that quotes the late Captain Frederick "Rick" Wisser,

who was born in the building in 1938 and whose great-grandfather founded the establishment. Rick Wisser's grandmother, Edna Roushrich Wisser, ran the store for many years.

When Wisser's was no more, the corner became the home to such businesses as the Joy Lounge, Mary Carter Paint Store, Tom's Tavern and, currently, the Gretna Tavern. There are apartments on the upper floor.



The Wisser German Grocery, Restaurant and Bar, circa 1900, at the corner of Copernicus and Fourth Street.



Today, the two-story building houses the Gretna Tavern at the same historic corner.



Germans Have Created 1,200 Coronavirus Words

If you go out in Germany during the pandemic, don't forget your **Alltagsmaske** (everyday mask) or **Spuckschutzschirm** (spit protection umbrella). If it's a bit frigid outside, maybe don a **Schnutenpulli** (literally, snout sweater, a cozier word for mask).

Heading out on a date? Be sure to check the latest **Mundschutzmode** (mouth protection fashion) before selecting your **Gesichtskondom** (face condom, as a mask is sometimes known).

Germany's lockdown entailed no restrictions on the language's propensity for multisyllabic, often tongue-twisting words. Germans have coined more than 1,200 of them to describe the rules and realities of life in the time of the novel coronavirus.

Social distancing is **Mindestabstandsregelung** (minimum-distance regulation). Or, to get more precise, **Anderthalbmeter-gesellschaft** (one-and-a-half-meter society) for a group abiding by distancing rules.

You need ways to cope? How about a little

Glühweinstandhopping (hopping between mulled-wine stands) while, of course, paying attention to **Mindestabstandsregelungen**?

As in most places, though, their use and meaning are also political. At the start of the pandemic, for example, the prohibition on going outside was called **Ausgangssperre** (going-out curfew). But German politicians soon realized that was a misnomer, because people could still go outside to exercise, shop for essentials or meet up with another person to go for a walk. The word changed to **Ausgangsbeschränkung** (going-out restriction) before later being subsumed by the more general English term "lockdown."

In recent months especially, with debates over vaccines flaring, words such as "**Coronadiktatur**" (corona dictatorship) and "**Impfzwang**" (forced vaccination) have been shared widely on social media and at anti-government demonstrations.

(From This Week in Germany, published by the German Embassy)



IN MEMORIAM



Frank Luther Beier Jr.

A former board member in the GACC's early years, Frank Luther Beier, Jr. of Kenner, Louisiana, passed away unexpectedly on February 13, 2021. He was 79 years old. Frank graduated from East Jefferson High School in 1959 and Louisiana State University in 1965 with a degree in electrical engineering. He was a successful entrepreneur with businesses in Metairie and Harahan.

Frank is survived by his two brothers, Karl Beier (Sandy) of South Carolina and Eric Beier (Sharon) of Covington, Louisiana. He is also survived by his three sons, Frank Luther Beier, III (Karen) of Metairie, Louisiana, Hans Trulock Beier (Erika) of North Carolina, and Heinrich Dannemann Beier of Kenner, Louisiana.

Frank was a regular attendee of the German Church Services in New Orleans, a longstanding member and past president of the Deutsches Haus in New Orleans and a longstanding member of The Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana Free and Accepted Masons. He served as treasurer of the GACC's first Board of Directors and helped in its organization. A ceremony celebrating his life, led by the Masons, was held at the Deutsches Haus on February 28.



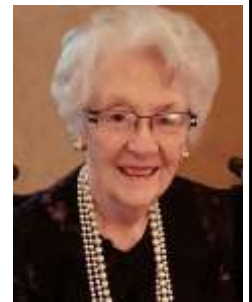
Frank Bier Jr.



Viola Dufrene

Viola Toussel Dufrene

GACC member Viola D'Antoni Toussel Dufrene passed away on December 5, 2020, at the age of 91. She was the beloved wife of the late Acklin J. Dufrene since May 20, 1944, beloved mother of Harry A. Dufrene (wife Cindy) and Patricia D. Schneider (husband John), and half sister of Gerald D'Antoni (Roz). Viola was the co-owner, along with her daughter Patricia Schneider, of Tiffany's Flower Shoppe in Violet, Louisiana. She was a lifelong resident of Arabi and St. Bernard until Hurricane Katrina, when she moved to Terrytown. She was a member of the Terrytown Golden Agers.



Claire Wetta

Claire Armbruster Wetta

Claire Rose Armbruster Wetta, a lifelong resident of New Orleans and a charter member of the GACC, passed away on March 12, 2020, at the age of 91. She was married to the late Walter Blaise Wetta for 45 years. The last survivor of seven siblings, Claire was the sister of Otto, Jr., George, Bernard, William and Robert Armbruster, and her only sister Anna Louise LaRocca. She is survived by her three daughters Margaret Claire Salisbury (Charles), Kim Elizabeth Jarigese (Kevin) and Elizabeth Anne Brantley (Chris).



A 1926 View of McDonoghville

Reprinted from the *New Orleans Item*, Sunday, September 26, 1926

"McDonoghville, that portion of Jefferson Parish located on the west side of the Mississippi River, is fast becoming a railroad town. More than 12 city blocks have been taken over by the Texas Pacific-Missouri Pacific Railroad Terminal of New Orleans to be used for railroad improvements. Tracks have been laid and work on the construction of a round house will begin shortly, officials of the terminal announced Saturday. Hundreds of thousands of dollars will be used for the expenditure of improvements on the railroad in this section of Jefferson Parish.

"Now that employees of the terminal will make their homes in McDonoghville, it won't be long before that place can boast of a larger population than its neighboring community, Gretna. Approximately 100 additional homes have been built in this striving community and a number of retail business

places are now under construction. McDonoghville is regarded as one of the fastest growing subdivisions in the state and will be on a par with the leading smaller towns in Louisiana in the near future. This boom will last. It's not the kind that develops at daybreak and dwindles by nightfall.

"One of the most modern schools in the Jefferson Parish School Board system is now under construction in McDonoghville, once the home of John McDonogh. This institution is being erected at a cost of nearly \$200,000 and should be completed the latter part of the year. It is being built across from the McDonogh playgrounds. Streetcars pass one block from the building thus giving the children easy transportation. There are several other small schools in McDonoghville. On the boundary line stands the McDonogh-Jefferson High School which has turned out many great men of the state.

"McDonoghville is located between Algiers and Gretna and has wonderful prospects of growing into a large residential section as well as an industrial town. McDonoghville is only five minutes by automobile from Algiers and about the same time from Gretna. Roads leading into this place are in good condition. One may travel from Algiers to McDonoghville on the same gravel highway which leads into Marrero, Westwego and other small places on the west side of the river."

Meet The Immigrants

A column spotlighting German families, part of research by genealogist Pat Smith

Wilhelm Karl Weyer Sr. Margaretha Deeme
 Born in 1863 in Germany. Born in 1873 in Germany.
 Died in 1939 in Gretna, Died in 1940 in Gretna.
 Both are buried in Hook and Ladder Cemetery.

Wilhelm arrived in the U.S. in 1889. He and Maggie were married in 1894. Their children were Wilhelm Jr., Ignatius Herbert, James, Ernest, Paul, Louisa "Lulie" and Veronica. Couvier Street in Gretna was renamed for Wilhelm Karl Weyer Jr., a World War I veteran who died from war-related injuries.



The Weyer tomb in Hook and Ladder Cemetery in Gretna.

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The **GACC Newsletter** is published monthly. Suggestions are welcome; email them to germanamerican@bellsouth.net, or call newsletter editor **Carol Schlueter**, 504-363-4202.

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The first location of Salem Lutheran Church was on Fourth Street near Amelia in Gretna. In this photo, perhaps taken during the 1891 crevasse that flooded Gretna, the parsonage is at right of the church and the school is at the left. The congregation was founded in 1871 and this church was built the following year. (From the Historic New Orleans Collection)



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German-American
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