

2013 PROGRAM



Welcome to Louisiana! We are so happy you have come to visit us this year. This is the first time we have hosted our friends from Meylan in the fall. Between September and January, we celebrate Football, Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas. While you are here, we will introduce you to football and Thanksgiving celebrations. You will probably see many Halloween decorations while you are here. We will also introduce you to the many different cuisines we enjoy in Gonzales.

Unfortunately, hurricane season does not end until November 30, but we are hoping you won't experience that event with us this year!

We hope you have a great time. If there is anything you need, please do not hesitate to let your host family know. You may also speak with one of the officers and we will do our best to accommodate you.

Karen Hatcher, President
Ronnie Comeaux, Vice-President
Ann LeBlanc, Treasurer
Carol Ann Frederic, Secretary

WEDNESDAY: OCTOBER 9, 2013

We will leave Gonzales at 9:00 am for a day in Baton Rouge.

The **Capitol Park Museum** features exhibits on the diverse aspects of Louisiana history, industry and culture. There are many exhibits including the Louisiana Purchase and Mardi Gras traditions throughout the state.

Lunch at the Tsunami Restaurant. We will have lunch overlooking the Mississippi River. This restaurant features Japanese inspired food and is located in the center of art and culture in downtown Baton Rouge.



Old Governor's Mansion. This house was built in 1929 and served the governors of Louisiana until 1963, when a new mansion was built. The floor plan of the Mansion is very much like the floor plan of the White House in Washington, D.C. Both have similar entrance rooms, East Rooms and State Dining Rooms on their first floors. Both have Oval rooms on their second floors, as well as East Wing guest bedrooms. Just inside the front doors is a vestibule with coat rooms.

If time permits, we will go to the top of the **Louisiana State Capitol**. There you will have an excellent view of the city of Baton Rouge.

We will tour the **LSU** football stadium at 3:30

The evening will be free to spend with your host families.



THURSDAY: OCTOBER 10, 2013

At 8:00 am, we will leave Gonzales for an interesting day across the Mississippi River. This area of Louisiana is quite famous for making sugar. This is the season when sugar cane is ready to be harvested and processed into sugar.

One of only 13 remaining sugar mills, **Cora Texas Sugar Mill** was established in 1928. At that time, railway cars carried sugarcane to the mill for processing. The mill had 145 cars. In 1948, the mill was purchased by the Kessler family, which still operates the mill today. Through the years, the mill has grown from a small operation that ground about 1,000 tons of cane a day to handling 15,000 tons daily during grinding season. The railroad operation was discontinued in 1948 and replaced by tractor-trailer operations on the new La. Hwy. 1. During grinding season (October through January), the mill operates 24 hours a day and currently grinds approximately 1.3 million tons of sugarcane into 300 million pounds of sugar annually.

We will also tour the **locks in Plaquemine** and have a picnic lunch there. Bayou Plaquemine served as a vital waterway from the Mississippi River to the interior of Louisiana during the 1800s and into the mid 1900s. Because of its importance both as a major transportation route and a force for economic prosperity, Congress authorized the construction of a lock here in the late 1800s. Construction began in 1895 and was completed in 1909. Now a state historic site, it includes a museum, visitors center, and an open air pavilion with a display of various water craft used when the lock was operational.

After lunch, we will tour the area and also tour **Nottoway Plantation**. The majestic Nottoway Plantation is the largest remaining plantation home in the south. Nottoway was completed in 1859 for Mr. and Mrs. John Hampden Randolph and their 11 children. The wealth of sugarcane farmer Randolph shows with 15 foot ceilings in its 64 rooms and intricate woodwork throughout.



We will have our evening meal at **Cracker Barrel**, a restaurant in Gonzales. This restaurant serves typical food cooked and served throughout the southern portion of the United States. Southern cooking is quite different from Cajun cooking and the style of cooking in the northern states. There is also a country store located in the restaurant that is reminiscent of country stores of long ago.

FRIDAY: OCTOBER 11, 2013

On Friday, we will board a motor coach at 8:30 and travel about 1.5 hours to the Lafayette area. We will cross the Atchafalaya Basin. The bridge is 18 miles (29 km) long.



We will go deep into a swamp on the **Cajun Country Swamp Tour**. We will cross the historic Bayou Teche and pass through the small Cajun town of Breaux Bridge. The swamp tour guides are native experienced commercial fisherman and avid outdoors men. The swamp tour boat is an authentic Cajun crawfishing skiff, which is a type of open swamp boat developed to navigate through the harsh conditions of backwater swamps.

Lunch will be at **Café des Amis** and then we will go to the **Vermilionville Living History and Folk Life Park**. Vermilionville is the largest physical representation of Acadian and Creole culture in the world. The 23-acre living history, heritage and folklife village on the banks of Bayou Vermilion portrays the cultures of the Acadian and Creole people who settled the Attakapas area of Louisiana between 1765 and 1890. The museum contains many unique restored historical items and costumed artisans work daily in the park providing an example of how various tasks and crafts were completed back in the early days.



We will finish the evening at the **Festivals Acadiens et Créoles**, which is a celebration of the French heritage of Louisiana. Acadians, or Cajuns as they are now called, were exiled from Nova Scotia in 1755. They brought with them a rich cultural heritage, which included a blend of French, Celtic, Scots-Irish and Native American influences. This mixture is evident in a rich oral tradition and repertoire of songs and dances. The Festivals Acadiens is a merger of three festivals: the Bayou Food Festival, the Acadiana Fair & Trade Show, and the Festival de Musique Acadienne/Cajun Music Festival.

We will leave the area at 8:30 pm to travel back to Gonzales.

SATURDAY: OCTOBER 12, 2013



Football is a very large activity between September and December. Middle School (grades 5-8) games are held on Thursday nights, High School (grades 9-12) games are held on Friday nights, University games are held on Saturdays and Professional teams play on Sundays. In south Louisiana, “tailgating” is a tradition. This practice began with people bringing food and eating from the tailgates of their trucks as they waited for a game to begin. Today, the Louisiana State University football team is playing against a team from Florida. The **LSU stadium** will seat approximately 100,000 people. Tickets are sold out in advance. There will be ANOTHER 40,000 people or so who will be on the LSU campus, but unable to get inside of the stadium. Many of these people will have brought their motor homes

and trucks to set up for tailgating a day or so before the game, and in true Louisiana tradition, will share food with anyone who walks by. We will not be able to sit inside the stadium to watch the game, but we will be able to experience tailgating. Bring a chair, wear comfortable clothes and enjoy the day!



SUNDAY: OCTOBER 13, 2013



The vans will leave Gonzales at 7:30 for New Orleans. We will have a traditional snack of beignets and café au lait and then take a street car to tour the leafy, magnolia shaded streets of the Garden District and the Lafayette Cemetery. This walking tour is not just mansions and manicured gardens, but stories of legends, tragedy, epidemics, lost causes, movie stars, celebrity chefs, and haunted spirits.

After the tour, we will travel back to the French Quarter for some free time to shop before getting on the Natchez Steamboat for a lunch cruise on the Mississippi River. We need to be at the dock by 2:15.



The day of planned activities will end around 4:30. At that time, one van will go back to Gonzales and the other van will stay in New Orleans for those who wish to experience the night activities.

MONDAY: OCTOBER 14, 2013

Monday will be a “free” day for you to enjoy with your host families. Please let your host family know if there is anything in particular you wish do see or shop for.

Karen will be serving a late breakfast at her home at 9:30 for those who wish to have a lazy day. Come and sit and relax, or eat and go. Please let your host family know if you would like to go to Karen’s for breakfast.

The River Region Art Association will hold a reception honoring the artists who have come from Meylan at 5:00 pm at their art gallery.



The banquet will begin at 6:30 and will be held at Mike Anderson’s. Mr. Jean Claude Brunet, Consul General of France in New Orleans, will be our special speaker. We will enjoy true Louisiana foods at this banquet.

TUESDAY: OCTOBER 15, 2013

We will be spending the day in Gonzales! We will meet at 9:00 am for some shopping at Cabelas and at Tanger Mall. You will be able to shop duty-free at **Tanger Mall** if you bring your passport with you. You need to pick up a form at the Shopper's Services Center for the cashiers to record your purchases.



Cabelas is a store that sells equipment needed for camping, outdoor cooking, hunting and fishing. You will enjoy the exhibition of wild animals and the aquarium. Cabelas sells excellent fudge candy in their store upstairs.

At 11:00, we go to a local **TV studio** for a quick interview and taping session. Afterwards, we will eat lunch at a Mexican restaurant, **Casa Maria**. Gonzales has a large population of Hispanic immigrants and we now have many Mexican restaurants in the area.

After lunch, we will spend some fun time at an entertainment facility that opened up in Gonzales in 2012. We will enjoy bowling and walking through a laser maze. Arcade games are also available at **Premier Lanes**.

A good way to finish up the day will be music and dancing at **Jambalaya Park**! Gonzales is world-famous for its Jambalaya and the Jambalaya Association will be cooking for us. Swamp-Pop music is especially popular in Gonzales and we will enjoy both Swamp-Pop and Cajun music at the park. A live band will be performing. We might even learn some Cajun dance moves!



WEDNESDAY: OCTOBER 16, 2013



Thanksgiving Day is a national holiday celebrated primarily in the United States and Canada as a day of giving thanks for the blessing of the harvest and blessings of the preceding year. In the United States, Thanksgiving is celebrated on the 4th Thursday in November. We will enjoy traditional foods prepared by the host families and celebrate this holiday with the **Gonzales Boat Club**.

Afterwards, we will travel on party barges for an afternoon on the waterways. The Gonzales Boat Club was formed in 1959. They have been very gracious to host our friends from Meylan each visit. Please enjoy a relaxing time.

The evening will be free as you need to prepare for your trip back to Meylan. We hope you have enjoyed your stay here. If there is anything you wish to purchase or see before leaving, please let your host family know.

Thank you so much for visiting us. We hope you have a safe trip home and look forward to seeing you again!

THURSDAY: OCTOBER 17, 2013

The vans will leave Gonzales at 7:00 am for the New Orleans airport.