

## Gators & Freighters Day 8:

### Bonne Carre Island to Algiers Point



### *Lower Mississippi River Dispatch No 213*

Posted Thursday, Oct 29, 2015 - Algiers Point (LBD95)

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For the completion of the [www.rivergator.org](http://www.rivergator.org)

*1 million words describing the Middle & Lower Mississippi River.  
Written for paddlers and any others seeking the “wilderness within”*

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*Intro: The Rivergator paddlers are weary but elated after a 37 mile paddle from Bonne Carre Island to Algiers Point, which took us under the last bridge on the entire Mississippi River system, and we are now camped on a dune above its deepest waters (said to be 250 feet deep) with a view of the French Quarter across channel. We are so close we can hear the bell of the St. Louis Cathedral ring the hour. A shout out to Mrs. Mary Staudinger who brought us a fresh*

*home-cooked meal (2 big pans full of spicy chicken fricassee) for a special hand-delivery from Audubon Park "The Fly." As a celebration of our arrival in the "Big Easy" New Orleans native (and Mighty Quapaw graduate) Christopher Staudinger "Wolife" shares some writing inspired by his nose.*

## **Day 8 - Bonne Carre Island (RBD132) to Algiers Point (LBD95) - 37 miles**

### **SMELLS**

*by Wolf E. Staudinger*

This part of the river is at once very familiar to me and very brand new. I've lived most of my life within miles of the river near New Orleans, but now that I'm seeing it from the inside out, it looks, feels, and smells a lot different.

Here are some of the smells we've been smelling in the last few days between Baton Rouge and St. Charles parish, where we're camped:



- diesel fuel: there are so many tow boats, freighters, tug boats, crew boats, dredges, cranes, and trains around here that there's always a lingering burnt diesel smell.

- raw gasoline fumes, coming from one of these petrochemical loading docks, where six or ten hoses dangle from a tall bulwark, waiting to hook up to a freighter bound for China.

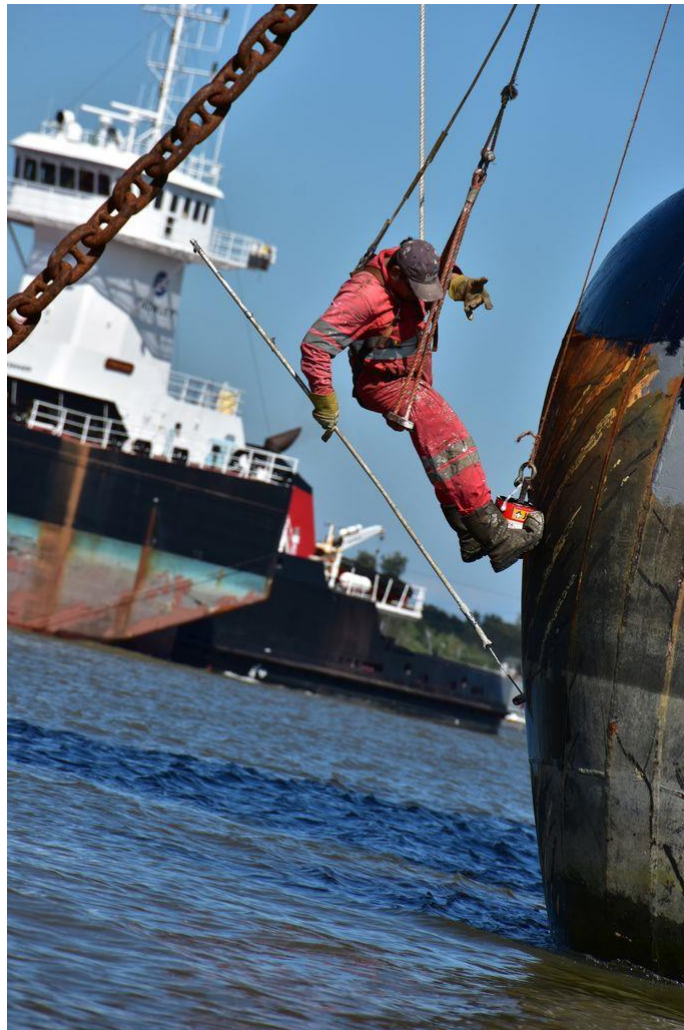


- willows as usual, thankfully. John said that the willows in Paulina we're giving off a particularly light and sweet smell.

- a very concentrated spray paint / mineral spirits smell



-sour malty corn. We're seeing the end of the road for the fields and fields of corn that this country grows. Down here, the corn shoots out of these big tubes, dangling from the loading docks, and into the holds of freighters with names like Hai Wei or the Sea Queen. All concentrated, though, the corn smells kind of dank.



- steak! Saturday must have been steak day for the barge crews. the towboats had their grills smoking and charring some nice big corn-fed cow meat.

- cow manure. Even though this 85 mile stretch of river has the largest refining capacity of any place in America, it's really rural. We also have smelled a thick burning wood smell, accompanied by a cloud of smoke over the horizon, which we think was a sugarcane field ablaze. This whole area was originally settled to farm sugar, indigo, and cotton.

- deep malty hot dog with an after hint of burnt molasses. This is the smell of a sugar refinery.

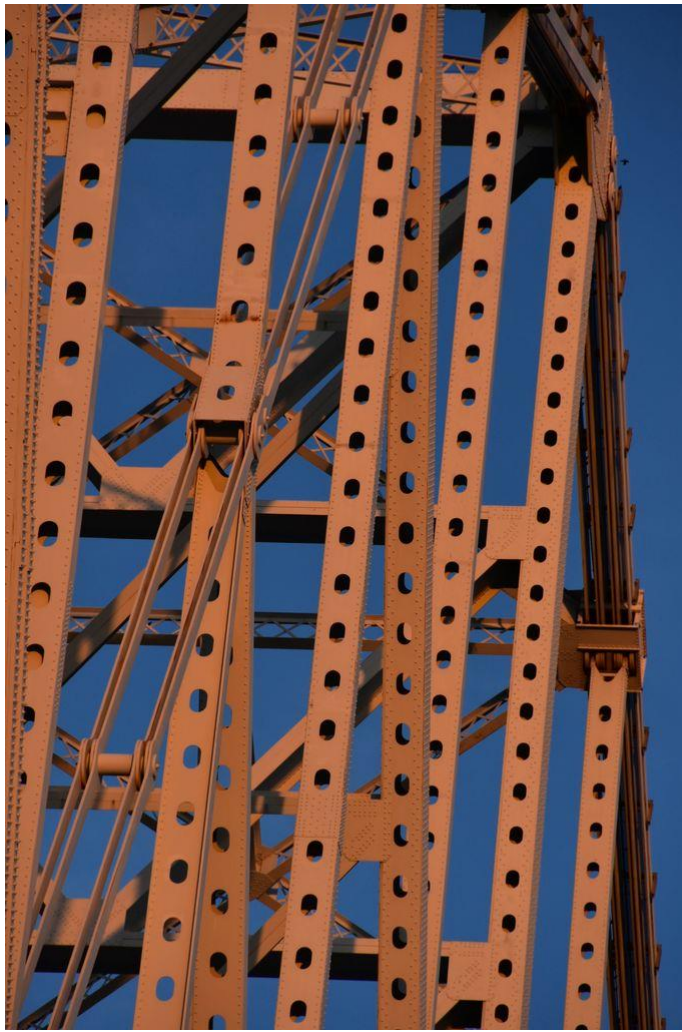
- rain. we've gotten our fair share of rain. It comes in rattling sheets across the water. and it smells a lot different from the river water. John says the river water has a "sickly, curdled milk smell," similar to the smell of the water in Memphis.



- the pollen of a banana blossom. It's banana season in southern Louisiana. Back in the spring or summer, the tree dropped a rope from which dangles a deep purple teardrop-shaped mass as thick as a

cabbage. That's the flower and it is pungent and fertile. From the rope grows a bunch of green bananas. In Donaldsonville, bayou lafourche (luh-foosh) used to split off from the Mississippi River and go south towards Houma and the gulf. But at some point, bayou lafourche was cut off from the river by the levees. Now, a set of huge pumps and pipes carry the Mississippi River water up over the levees and into bayou lafourche. At the strange grassy place where the water churns up from these pipes and bayou lafourche begins, we found a grove of flowering and fruiting banana trees.

- satsuma: it's also citrus season down here. And The Orrs as well as the Pochés shared some of their fruit.



- smell of mustard burnt sugar dry ramen noodle shrimp/chicken powder flavor packet
- during the storm, Zoe lent me her instyle magazine, which had several perfume samples never before experienced in this tent, and vastly different from the other smells floating around in it.



- my mother's chicken fricasse. She, my sisters, my neice, and my nephews met up with us at the top of New Orleans, and delivered two big pans of chicken and gravy. We took them to our campsite and devoured them here on Algiers Point: a familiar taste with a view of the city I've never seen.



- Christopher "Wolf" E. Staudinger

For photos and more reading, go to [www.rivergator.org](http://www.rivergator.org)

***The Lower Mississippi River Dispatch***

**is a service of the Lower Mississippi River Foundation**