



THE FISHIN' INSIDER

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PLEASE NOTE: WE AT THE COASTAL CURRENT ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING NOR CAN WE IMAGINE WHY WE AGREED TO PRINT IT.

SOMEWHERE IN THE VICINITY OF LITTLE VIETNAM, LOUISIANA

Originally, I thought the notice from NOAA/NMFS was a practical joke sent out by a bureaucrat with entirely too much time on his hands. Then I called Nelson Biederman of the Blue Water Fishing Association and he was dead earnest. Because the longliners have been under assault from every quarter NMFS had come up with a rule requiring the vessels and crews to undergo training and equipping the boats with the idea of enhancing their proficiency in handling and releasing sea turtles. The workshop was held last Monday in New Orleans at the VIET Community Center. Nelson said the morning session would be pretty boring, but the afternoon session was gonna be hands on so it should be interesting.

Checked into the Four Points Sheraton shortly after noon and shagged a cab, gave the cabbie, a likable gent that I suspect spent most of his time on earth poachin' the swamps of south Louisiana, the address and phone number to the joint and sat back for the ride. As we were weavin' in and out of traffic doing about eighty he was havin' a very expressive conversation on his cell phone. Come to find out about half way to Biloxi, his thick Cajun accent was not understood by the person on the other end of the line and her directions in sing-song broken Vietnamese was definitely not being understood by the man at the wheel. When I asked the man if we were makin' a side trip to Mississippi he let out a stream of cuss words and damn near hit a semi gettin' off I-10. As we sat at a stop light I gently asked

him what the problem was and was informed that his dispatcher was out and that the Vietnamese lady really didn't know where she was so gettin' directions was problematic.

Ahh, I love an adventure but this was gettin' ridiculous since it was now about three and we were now considerably farther away from my destination than when we began. He finally got the dispatcher as we weaved around cars and trucks on our way back to the Big Easy. He got his directions to Michoud Blvd. and it was off to the races. We were screamin' down what I thought was Michoud when I caught an address out the corner of my blurry eyes. It read 14 thousand something or other, and since we were lookin' for 4600 block we were now about ten thousand blocks away. I mentioned this to the dude. He pulls the van off on the shoulder and hops out with his bat phone. I hop out to have a smoke. The picture you see here is the gent having one of several haranguing conversations with god knows whom. When he was finished we piled back in and pulled a uee to head back in the direction that we'd come. At that point I just had to ask the dude how hard a time I'd have gettin' a cab out of Little Vietnam when I was ready to leave. By now it was after five and he said bad time because of the time of day most folks stayed away cuz they weren't welcome. I got the picture and told him I'd changed my plans. "We're headin' for the Old Absinthe House in the Quarter", I said. He'd never heard of it but at least he knew where the French Quarter was.

Walked in half way through happy hour and there



was J O McCall and Bliss and another buddy by the name of John. He was on his bat phone engaged in a haranguing call with an ex-wife and red as a beet. After several libations come to find out that J O had had a close encounter with an oversized bathtub in the early hours a few days back. He'd chipped a tooth and broken his shoulder, as we speak there down in Beltze rehabbin'.

Wellll folks, sometimes us writers go to out of the way places to get oddball stories. Sometimes we get the story and sometimes we don't but it's usually a hell of an adventure.

Editor's Note: We are very happy that we don't pay for your "adventures".