

Hook, line and sinker

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Fishing ? "maybe it's an excuse to wake up early, find some space to cast a line and stare at the morning's horizon." (Illustration by Arthur Nead)

If you concentrate, you can almost tune out the shouting and focus on the gentle tug of the tide on your fishing line. Here, beneath the Seabrook Bridge, where the Industrial Canal opens into Lake Pontchartrain, amidst the shattered hunks of concrete and iron twists of rebar that comprise the shoreline, the fishing is generally pretty good, and the show is often better.

It's Saturday morning and the sun barely made its way into the world when the dispute began between a number of guys on the fishing pier and those angling from a boat anchored offshore. At issue is whether or not the boat, pitching gently over the deepest part of the shipping channel ? where, presumably, fishing is best ? is too close to shore to be in compliance with local ordinances.

Mercifully, it is far enough away to allow for the histrionics of fist-shaking and name-calling while keeping both parties perfectly safe.

One pier fisherman goes as far as to threaten to cast his heavily weighted line at the boat, and maybe the absurdity of the threat is enough to humble everyone into silence, or maybe it has occurred to all of them that fish don't really like the sound of

people.

In any case, quiet finally settles upon the water, and fishing resumes in earnest.

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