



MARCH 2021 | SPRING EDITION

MISSISSIPPI MARITIME MUSEUM

The Official Newsletter of the Mississippi Maritime Museum (MMM), Jackson County, MS



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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

As President of the Mississippi Maritime Museum (MMM), I hope that you and your families had a very happy and safe New Year in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. The beginning of 2021 is looking promising with the decline of COVID cases and the distribution of several vaccines to fight this virus.

Even though COVID-19 is still with us, the MMM Board will continue to move forward with our mission to bring a Maritime Museum to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. A Maritime Museum that will not only tell the story of Mississippi's proud 300-year Maritime history, but also educate our citizens and youth on the importance of the maritime industry to our nation. Our Museum Director, Lorren West, will enlighten you on several projects she has undertaken. So, please look for the Director's Report on page 2. In addition, our Membership Coordinator, Rene' Shaw, shares her report on how we are doing with membership on Pg 3.

One of the challenges the Board is facing in the COVID-19 world is how we can hold a General Membership meeting. We think we have found a solution and hope that all our members will be able to participate. Please see details on page 2 and mark your calendar! The Board has an excellent slate of candidates to present to the membership as future Directors, learn more about them on Page 4.

Again, I encourage you to continue wearing your mask, keep social distances, and wash those hands so that we may eventually be able to put this virus to rest.

Perry Thompson
President

NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by *Lorren West*

Ahoy to all our maritime friends, families and community members,

I trust many of you have waved 2020 good-bye and are welcoming 2021 with renewed energy, optimism and enthusiasm. As well, our Mississippi Maritime Museum is welcoming this year with maritime energy, optimism and enthusiasm! We are excited to be hosting this year's Annual Membership Event on **Thursday May 13, 2021! Please join us any time between 4pm-7pm!** Details will be sent to you later this spring! I am excited to meet you and discuss gulf coast maritime endeavors!

Many a mariner showed strength on the open waters facing unknown storms. We want to demonstrate to our valued members; our maritime museum is a strong seafarer too!

Your maritime museum has been involved in many areas of development this year. We are committed to continue strong relationships with local agencies. In addition, The City of Pascagoula, The Pascagoula Recreation Department, Main Street-Pascagoula, Jackson County Board of Supervisors are supportive of our vision. We continue to partner with our state legislature and our respected local representative Brice Wiggins.

Our current real estate development is underway. Our board of directors and I are working diligently to identify best paths to transition our museum to new heights for public maritime enjoyment. Stay tuned for updates!

Patti Brooks, Kelly Dye and I have formed the museum's first education committee. We have developed educational outreach topics to be implemented as offerings at our museum. We are targeting a Summer 2021 launch date.

Some topics include "Navigating the Seas," "Maritime Industry/Careers" and "Maritime Folklore." Stay tuned for details!

Save the date!! March 16th Tuesday, 1pm - 7pm we are hosting our first event of the year. The American Red Cross and our Mississippi Maritime Museum will be hosting our inaugural blood drive. **Save a life and join us any time between 1pm - 7pm.** The Red Cross and our museum will be COVID protected. If you recently received a COVID immunization shot, no problem. You are A-OK to donate.

In closing, please know our maritime team desires to provide you with upcoming maritime experiences and programming. We continue to work to ensure a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible museum and activity center for all to enjoy. We appreciate you as a valued member, your belief in our future maritime success and passion for our gulf coast Mississippi maritime history preservation and promotion.

Please email me at Lrrnwest1@gmail.com with any questions or valued input.

Many maritime blessings,

Lorren West

Executive Director

Membership News

This year will be a 'banner year' for the maritime museum... We have 89 new and renewed maritime memberships so far!! We appreciate your passion for our maritime future. 2020 closed with 145 memberships, including 22 families designated as Lifetime, and 35 joining from our Capital Campaign!

The General Membership Meeting will be held Thursday, May 13th, 2021. 4pm-7pm.

Stay tuned for more details.

A friendly reminder that renewal season is upon us

Dues are payable either by sending a check to

MMM, P.O. Box 243,

Pascagoula, MS, 39568

or by visiting our website – msmaritimemuseum.com

and clicking on the membership page to use PayPal.

Dues are \$25 per year, with the Lifetime Membership

option available for a one-time payment of \$350.

Did you know? Your dues help pay for:

- educational supplies,
- museum public relations,
- new website development
- and much more!

Communicating with you is very important to us. If you are unsure of your membership status or need to update your mailing address or other contact information please email us at MSMMuseum@gmail.com and I will respond as quickly as possible.

THANK YOU!

Rene' Shaw

Chairman

PS: We hope you enjoyed the special Mississippi Maritime Museum Holiday ornament enclosed in the last newsletter.





BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS 2021-2023

Report from the Nominating
Committee

Board Elections May 13, 2021

The Nominating Committee,
which includes:

Lisa Cannon, Chair of the
Recruitment & Development
Committee

Perry Thompson, MMM
President

Ron Schnoor, Board Director
and

Lorren West, Museum Director

Mrs. Cannon has done an
outstanding job recruiting
potential candidates to serve on
the MMM Board of Directors. As
such, we present the following
candidates for the 2021-2023
term.

John Mosley, Jr.

John is a Pascagoula High School graduate and continued his education at the University of Southern Mississippi and Excelsior College with a concentration in Marketing. He has enjoyed residing in Moss Point for most of his life. John served as president of the Jackson County Republican Club and was a member of the Jackson County Republican Committee. John is an Area Representative for the National Federation of Independent Business. John is a Board Member and former State Facilitator of Jackson County CASA, served as Executive Director of the Moss Point Mayor's Youth Council, and serves as a Board Member of the Moss Point Community Development Group. John has co-owned two small businesses, a facilities management firm and a commissary and food truck, and currently owns a freight brokering agency. John enjoys a good strategy suspense filled TV drama when he has time!

Kelly Yates Dye

Kelly began her career with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) in 2008 and has served as Workforce Director since December of 2015. Kelly currently holds the position of Director of the MGCCC Center within the Haley Reeves Barbour Maritime Training Academy in Pascagoula. Prior to joining the MGCCC team, Kelly was an Interviewer and Director of the federally funded On-the-Job (OJT) program with the Mississippi Department of Employment Security at their Pascagoula WIN Job Center. A life-long resident of Jackson County, Kelly graduated from MGCCC in 1990 with her Associate degree, earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1992, and Master of Business Administration from Western Governor's University in 2015.

Eddie Williams

A lifelong resident of Pascagoula, Eddie is married to the former Kathleen Moore, and they have three children and four grandchildren. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Mississippi in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in Sociology and attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill earning a master's degree in Sociology before returning to Ole Miss to attend Law School in 1976. He began practicing law in Pascagoula in January 1979. Eddie served as full-time attorney for the City of Pascagoula until retirement in July 2017. He has served as the President of the Jackson County Bar Association and the Mississippi Municipal Attorneys Association, was attorney for the Jackson-George Regional Library System for 23 years and served as the Chairman of the Committee for a New Pascagoula Public Library. He currently serves as counsel to the Gulf Regional Planning Commission in Harrison County. Eddie has a strong passion for the study of history and has enjoyed working on projects for the Mississippi Maritime Museum.

The Mighty Live Oak

LIVE OAK - THE FOUNDATION OF SHIPBUILDING IN AMERICA

THE "LIVE OAKERS" WERE SKILLED MASTER SHIP CARPENTERS WHO TRAVELED IN GROUPS, BRINGING THEIR FAMILIES ALONG AND LIVING IN SELECTED AREAS OF LIVE OAK GROWTH, HEWING THE LIVE OAK TO SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SHIPS FRAMING. THEY LIVED FOR A YEAR OR SO, THEN MOVED ON TO ANOTHER LOCATION, CONTINUING THE BACKBREAKING WORK OF HARVESTING THE MIGHTY LIVE OAK. THE "LIVE OAKERS" SOLD THEIR HEWED TIMBERS TO THE EUROPEAN SHIPBUILDERS AS WELL AS TO THE WEST INDIES, AND TO COLONIAL AMERICAN SHIPYARDS, EVEN BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR. NAVAL ACT OF 1794 CREATED THE UNITED STATES NAVY. WORK BEGAN ON SIX ORIGINAL FRIGATES AUTHORIZED AS PART OF THIS ACT. THE SIX WERE THE USS UNITED STATES, USS PRESIDENT, USS CONSTELLATION, USS CHESAPEAKE, USS CONGRESS AND USS CONSTITUTION (OLD IRONSIDES LAUNCHED IN 1797). THESE NEW SHIPS WERE BUILT WITH LIVE OAK FRAMES.

THE LIVE OAK (QUERCUS VIRGINIANA) HAS A LEATHERY TRUNK AND CROOKED BRANCHES THAT ARE DARK REDDISH BROWN AND CAN GROW 40 TO 50 FEET TALL. OFTEN COVERED WITH SPANISH MOSS, IT IS ONE OF THE MOST MAJESTIC TREES OF SOUTHERN COASTAL REGION OF THE U.S. THE TREES USUALLY DOMINATE EDGES OF SALT MARSHES AND OTHER WELL DRAINED COASTAL AREAS. THE HEAVIEST OF ALL OAKS, A CUBIC FOOT MAY WEIGH 75 POUNDS. LIVE OAK IS RESISTANT TO DISEASE AND DECAY WHICH MADE IT IDEAL FOR SHIPBUILDING.

THE PRACTICE OF USING LIVE OAK IN SHIPBUILDING WAS WELL ESTABLISHED IN AMERICA BY 1700. EARLY FAMOUS LIVE OAK VESSELS INCLUDE THE HANCOCK, AN AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY PRIVATEER, AND THE USS CONSTITUTION, BUILT IN BOSTON IN 1797.

THE USS CONSTITUTION WAS PART OF THE US FLEET INVOLVED IN THE WAR OF 1812 WHERE IT PROVED THE STRENGTH OF THE LIVE OAK HULL. ON THE AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 19TH, 1812 AND ABOUT 750 MILES OFF THE COAST OF MASSACHUSETTS, THE USS CONSTITUTION WAS IN A HEATED BATTLE WITH THE BRITISH FRIGATE GUERRIERE.

The Mighty Live Oak - Continued...

. BARELY FIFTY YARDS APART; EACH SHIP FIRED ITS TWENTY-TWO CANNONS POINT-BLANK INTO ITS OPPONENT. THE BARRAGE FROM THE BRITISH FRIGATE SEEMED TO BE HAVING LITTLE EFFECT, HOWEVER, AS ITS CANNON BALLS BOUNCED OFF THE CONSTITUTION'S RUGGED OAK SIDES, GIVING THE CONSTITUTION'S ITS FAMOUS NICKNAME OF "OLD IRONSIDES".

AFTER KATRINA, PAT KEENE, OF PASCAGOULA, SENT HIS FALLEN LIVE OAK TO THE RESTORATION PROJECT OF THE "OLD IRONSIDES", THE USS CONSTITUTION.

WITH BATTLE SUCCESSES AT SEA AND A BOOMING SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY, THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT WAS ADAMANT ABOUT ENSURING A FUTURE SUPPLY OF LIVE OAK AND RESERVED THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF SOUTHERN WOODLANDS TO PROTECT THE TREE FROM TIMBER INTERESTS. THIS INCLUDED PRESIDENT JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST, AND ONLY, FEDERAL TREE FARM IN WHAT'S NOW GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA, BEGINNING OPERATIONS IN 1829. SUPERINTENDENT HENRY MARIE BRACKENRIDGE, WHO LIVED ON THE TREE FARM, EXPERIMENTED WITH CULTIVATING THE LIVE OAK TREE. HE WAS PERHAPS OUR COUNTRY'S FIRST FEDERAL FORESTER.

WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IRONCLAD WARSHIP DURING THE MID-19TH CENTURY, THE LIVE OAK TREE LOST ITS IMPORTANCE TO SHIPBUILDING AND NATIONAL DEFENSE BUT STILL HAD AN EXTREMELY CRITICAL PLACE IN HISTORY.

LIVE OAKING: SOUTHERN TIMBER FOR TALL SHIPS, BY VIRGINIA STEELE WOOD, WHO WAS THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS NAVAL & MARITIME HISTORY REFERENCE LIBRARIAN FOR 32 YEARS. HER PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE THE AWARD-WINNING, LIVE OAKING: SOUTHERN TIMBER FOR TALL SHIPS. SHE HAS SERVED ON THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY'S ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE ON NAVAL HISTORY, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, NAVAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION.

SOURCE:

[HTTPS://WWW.THELIVINGURN.COM/BLOGS/NEWS/83227201-LIVE-OAK-THE-FOUNDATION-OF-SHIPBUILDING-IN-AMERICA](https://www.thelivingurn.com/blogs/news/83227201-live-oak-the-foundation-of-shipbuilding-in-america)



MISSISSIPPI MARITIME MUSEUM & ACTIVITY CENTER

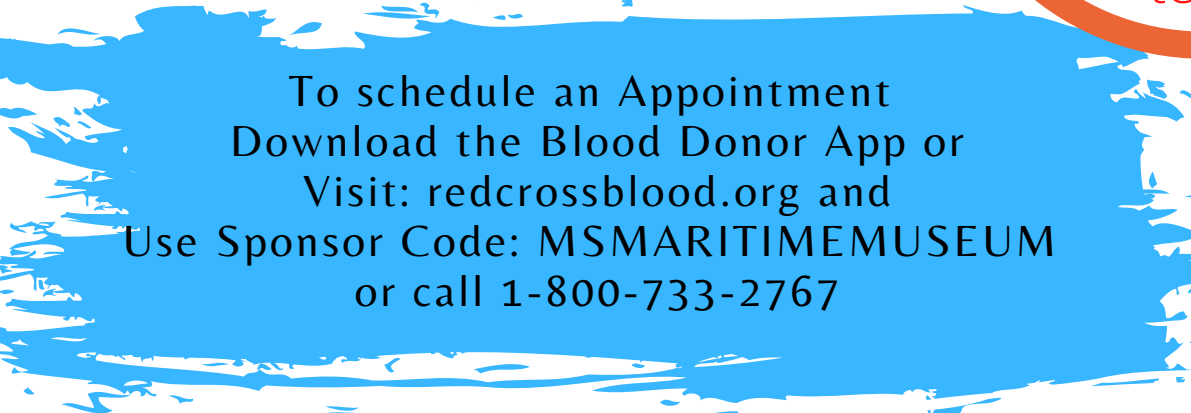
BLOOD DRIVE

TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021
1-6PM

MMM Conference Room
609 Dupont St.
Pascagoula, MS 39568



Donate
Blood
and receive
a FREE
COVID-19
Antibody
test!!



To schedule an Appointment
Download the Blood Donor App or
Visit: redcrossblood.org and
Use Sponsor Code: **MSMARITIMEMUSEUM**
or call 1-800-733-2767



*The antibody test is authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and may indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to the coronavirus, regardless of whether an individual developed symptoms. For the next few months, Red Cross blood, platelet and plasma donations will be tested using samples obtained at the time of donation and sent to a testing laboratory, where the samples will also undergo routine screening and infectious disease testing. Should you test positive for the COVID antibodies, your plasma may be used to help a current critical COVID patient.

A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity.

American Red Cross is practicing all COVID protocols, prescreening donor temperatures prior to entry to the blood drive, providing masks and hand sanitizer and extended cleaning between each donor. The safety and confidence of all donors, volunteers and our staff is very important.

A map of the Mississippi River is shown in the background, with a yellow title overlay. The title reads "MEET THE MASTER RIVER PILOT WHO CONQUORS THE MISSISSIPPI EVERY DAY".

MEET THE MASTER RIVER PILOT WHO CONQUORS THE MISSISSIPPI EVERY DAY

When a 900-foot oil tanker needs to squeeze through one of the most perilous and crowded waterways in the world, Captain Jared Austin is the only thing standing between safe passage and utter disaster.

It's winter on the Mississippi River, one of the busiest and most dangerous waterways in the world. Over the past two days, Captain Jared Austin has transported 300,000 barrels of jet fuel on a tanker headed for Europe and fifty thousand tons of corn on a freighter en route to Brazil. Austin is certified to pilot ships between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, Louisiana. It's his responsibility to know every bend of the river, and how its mood shifts, depending on the weather.

Today, the job is a four-mile transit from anchor to berth on the Spar Hydra, a bulk carrier that will be loaded with 53,000 tons of soybeans destined for Bangladesh.

Four miles doesn't sound like much. It's three minutes on a highway, less than one-sixth the length of a marathon. But winds are gusting and the river is low, so even with highly specialized training and years of experience piloting ships like the six-hundred-foot-long, sixty-thousand-ton Spar Hydra, this job will take Austin several hours, and test his expertise. ITraffic jams with convergences of twenty, thirty, forty ships, can get hairy. The river barely looks wide enough for two ships to pass, but, Austin says, "They absolutely do, all the time. In the ocean, the closest ship is, what, fifty miles away?"

Here we're all whizzing around each other." And ships don't have brakes like cars. These steel hunks can take miles to stop.

The bottom line: don't make a mistake.

Fewer than three hundred pilots in Louisiana are qualified to pilot on the river, and Austin is one of only six who are African American. In his mid-forties, he's six-foot-two and three hundred pounds. He was a college football player at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, Louisiana.

His head is shaved, and he sports a graying beard. He has a deep love for the river, something he's proud to share with Mark Twain, perhaps the most famous of all Mississippi River pilots.

Austin's a man of confidence in an industry where a single command could either lead to or divert disaster, so he strives for boring on the river. He has a short list of messes he's been in, and wants to keep it that way. Peril can come unexpectedly, and there are numerous close calls every day.

Some ships run up to nine hundred feet long – vessels six times larger than any Twain handled – and at times Austin drives them at speeds between ten and fifteen miles-per-hour, frequently carrying petroleum or toxic chemicals that, if spilled due to a crash, could cause an environmental disaster. He pilots in daylight, the pitch of night, rain, and high winds. “In fast river conditions,” Austin says, “there can be several different currents pulling in unpredictable directions, like a huge pot of water boiling crawfish.” If he gets caught in fog, he has to pilot blind and rely solely on radar.

Austin has managed his share of piloting difficulties. When a waterspout ran over the bow of his ship, his radar went black and the entire ship rocked. When his ship was hit by lightning, the electronics were destroyed. Austin says lightning storms coming across the river can look like “Ten Commandments-from-the-Bible kind of stuff.”

Austin’s first duty is to protect people and the waterfront from any major catastrophe. His duty to help move commerce comes second. Five hundred million tons of cargo run through the Mississippi River every year, and Austin thinks of himself as a connector, an essential cog in the global farm-to-table wheel. It’s personal to him; after all, he grew up on the river. “Water is where I find my peace,” he says.

Sixteen years ago, the man Austin affectionately calls “Dad,” the father of his best friend in Marrero, Louisiana, and a third-generation pilot, offered to sponsor Austin in the business. (Most pilots gain entrance through family connections.) Austin started working on a tugboat, while keeping his job as an inspector at a chemical plant, in order to study the river in earnest, learning its curves and tempers, along with the essential bond between tugboat and ship. Then he apprenticed for a year as a ship pilot and trained as a deputy pilot for three more years, graduating from smaller to larger ships. “As scary as it might sound,” Austin says, “that’s how it’s done. You watch, you practice.” He holds a Master Unlimited License, issued by the U.S. Coast Guard, permitting him to drive a vessel of any gross tonnage, as well as a First Class Pilot License for the section of river between Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Five years ago, he was elected into the New Orleans-Baton Rouge Steamship Pilots Association.

This morning, the Spar Hydra is empty of cargo, anchored, 41 miles by river from New Orleans. A twenty-person crew from India has been traveling onboard for a month already, and will remain with the ship another 45 days until it reaches Bangladesh.

International ship captains aren’t authorized to pilot ships on the Mississippi because they are not practiced in handling the narrow, fast, traffic-dense water. Instead, the captains hand over control of navigation to Louisiana riverboat pilots, who climb aboard like members of a relay team for maximum eight-hour shifts, until the ship finally reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

Austin works an alternating-week schedule, and when he’s working he is on call 24 hours a day for seven consecutive days. Last night, the dispatcher estimated Austin would get a call around three a.m. to head to the river to move the Spar Hydra. At 7:45 a.m., Austin is still at home waiting, but he takes it in stride. He’s accustomed to sleeping in the middle of the afternoon, eating breakfast at two a.m. or dinner at midnight – his schedule dictated by the river.

For Austin, though, the difficulty of such a job is figuring out how to be a good single dad to his twelve-year-old daughter. “The real struggle is balancing being a nurturer and disciplinarian,” he says. “I’m a man raising a feminist. I had to learn how to get in touch with my emotions.” Austin has had full custody of her since she was three, and a nanny watches her while he’s at work.

As with parenthood, there are inherent joys and challenges that come with his gig on the river. Austin often has to perform turns sharper than what ships are sea-tested to make. When the river gets high, he doesn’t always know if the ship will overcome the force of the current, or if he’ll be able to stop the ship’s swing. “There’ve been times I’ve flat out wondered if I was about to crash,” he says. “I’ve got full rudder, spinning the propeller as much as possible, and fingers crossed.”

He was on a ship that blew a fuse and the propeller became inoperable. The ship went careening. He dropped anchor and screeched to a halt less than a hundred feet from a chemical dock.

Another time he had to bounce off a fleet of barges along the riverbank in order to avoid crashing into another vessel which had a crew aboard.

River pilots operate by an unwritten rule: "Mud. Machine. Man." If a ship is in danger of crashing, the safest option is to run it into a muddy riverbank. The second option, as Austin says, "is to bend some steel." The absolute last resort is to damage human life.

Captain Austin is relaxed but vigilant. He learned early on, however, not to assume the same from others.

One morning around two a.m., Austin was on an 850-foot-long oil tanker painted DayGlo orange. A towboat without a barge approached his path in front of the ship. "I'm thinking, 'I know he sees me, I know he sees me, oh my God he doesn't see me!'" Austin sounded the danger whistle – five rapid blasts – flipped on a big spotlight, and somehow steered the 110,000-ton tanker around the relatively tiny boat.

Then there are the guys in canoes – adventure seekers. Captain Austin good-humoredly calls them "rocket scientists." Like Twain, he loves the concept of life on the river. It's romantic and beautiful. But while navigating from the bridge deck, a hundred feet above the water, a fourteen-foot kayak looks like a speck of dust. "Can you see a bug before it hits your windshield?" he asks, rhetorically. "Not only can I not see him, I wouldn't feel him if we did make contact."

At 9:15 a.m., Austin finally gets the call to be on the Spar Hydra by noon. He drives his black Jeep Wrangler from New Orleans toward LaPlace, the self-proclaimed Andouille sausage capital of the world. Along the way, he stops to buy four-dozen donuts for the tugboat crew he'll see shortly. Then he continues to the levee behind the Cargill Grain Transfer where he'll berth the Spar Hydra. He says, "I park where a job ends so I can immediately hop in my Jeep and go back into dad mode."

He's already orchestrated the timing, so a driver meets him at his car to transfer him to a crew boat, which is also waiting. On the way to the Spar Hydra, the crew boat pulls up beside a tugboat so Austin can hand off the donuts. Tugboat captains live on board full-time in weeklong shifts, and, having done it himself for more than a decade, Austin knows how much they appreciate food from land.

When the crew boat drops him off at the Spar Hydra, Austin steps onto the ship's long metal gangway, and halfway up catches a welcome waft of curry where he meets the captain. Together they climb to the bridge deck where Austin will take control of navigation and transit until the ship is berthed at the Cargill facility. He's immediately brought lunch: fried fish, soup, stewed cabbage and rice. The crew onboard calls him "Mr. Pilot."

He looks out from the bridge, a vantage point not unlike sitting atop a hill overlooking a valley. It's an impressive sight, this long flat stretch of south Louisiana: sugar cane fields, chemical plants, oil docks, barges in clusters near the bend of the river, and small communities of petroleum workers, fishermen and agricultural laborers.

This area is also one of the largest waterfowl flyways in the country. The multitude of ducks gets so thick, Captain Austin can see them on the radar, like splotches of ink in the river. There are also plenty of alligators and beavers. Underwater, giant catfish eat grain that spills from the Cargill granary and grow to the size of small humans. "People think that's a river tale," Austin says. "But Sweetie, a tugboat engineer, used to catch them with Vienna sausages on the hook."

The wind is blowing hard and can gust without notice. This could push the ship, increasing the chance of it doing a sideways slide into the berth. He calls for two tugboats, including the one that just received the donuts. With all preparations complete, Austin gives the command to lift the first anchor, "Heave starboard anchor!"

Once both anchors are lifted, he puts the ship in full maneuvering speed and brings it a few miles upriver.

Then, "Slow Ahead!"

The tugboats arrive and tie on to the portside of the ship. They look like toddler toys next to the enormous Spar Hydra, but they're mighty, and when they connect, Captain Austin can feel their vibration along with their tug; the extra weight helps slow the ship down. Tugs are a part of the overall timing of things, and here to help move the ship into correct position.

Together they travel further upriver. When Austin clears the turn near the Cargill facility, the wind is blowing off the dock. Instead of being a hindrance, the wind will help cushion the ship from slamming into the berth. That's lucky; Austin will be able to use the tugs, the river and the wind to his advantage.



At the Cargill berth, two hours into the job, Captain Austin has to essentially parallel park the ship, and there's already a ship in the lower berth. He must pass it at precisely the correct distance and angle, and then, while still creeping forward, edge the Spar Hydra sideways to align it lengthwise against the dock.

The ship captain nervously darts across the bridge. Austin remains measured, in total concentration. He communicates with the linemen, dock men, tug pilots, and ship captain, all individually, and simultaneously.

"Steady!" The command seems like the understatement of the day.

"Clutch straight in!" The tugs help fine tune adjustments. Inch by inch, the Spar Hydra lands softly alongside the berth.

"Hard straight in!" The tugboats turn, perpendicular, nose to ship. They hold the Spar Hydra steady long enough for the mooring men to tie the lines. The ship captain slows his pacing in visible relief. In truth, on his worst days at home he'd prefer to be at work. "Personal stuff, romantic stuff, family stuff, whatever's going on at home, it has to take a pause," he says. "I come out here and move my ship. It's a good little break."

Now it's the Spar Hydra that looks dwarfed beside the Cargill facility – a complex network of elevated chutes and tunnels, a steel maze that crosses over land and into water. It stretches over acres, and its grain elevators can manage more than four million bushels of grain. Its six loading spouts look like the design of a manic kid who just keeps connecting blocks, precariously high and sprawling across the floor, daring gravity and physics to not make the whole thing fall.

Two bulk carriers at anchor on the Mississippi River. Photography by Michel Varisco

It will take two days here to load the Spar Hydra with 53,000 tons of soybeans. There's an inch-thick covering of corn and soy on the dock. Grain dust swirls in the air. Austin's black sweatshirt is dotted with white flecks, like ash or an unusual Louisiana snow.

The sun pushes through gray clouds, sparkles on the river and off the red rust of the Spar Hydra. The view is striking, worth a moment's pause.

His work complete, Austin gives orders for the tugs to be released. He consults with the ship's captain, thanks the crew, disembarks from the Spar Hydra, and walks off Cargill grounds to his Jeep.

"All in all, a good day!"

CURRENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

Administration:

Help aid with executive director administrative projects including maritime proposals, grant submissions, Admin paperwork, coordinate management of minor museum facilities

Exhibits/Artifacts Acquisition Control:

Help plan and prepare to locate, obtain, restore, protect, document and manage all artifacts. Exhibit planning, presentation, community/state value determination

Grant identification/proposals

Partner with Executive Director in establishing new grant partners and aid in drafting subsections of proposals

Events:

Plan and manage social events and participation in public events.

Membership/Donor Recognition:

Establish appreciation and recognize value of new and current members. Enhance communication with all members through email, phone, calls, events Museum Development/Strategic and

Fund Raising/Capital Campaign:

Help establish foundation, help manage capital campaign, establish new contacts with emphasis on donations.

Buildings, IT & Facilities:

Help with coordination of building construction, renovations, IT framework and troubleshooting. Work with engineers, architects, exhibit techs.

Legislative:

Interact with Mississippi and U.S. Legislators on behalf of the museum; help coordinate lobbyist activities.

Education:

Partner with staff and community to develop maritime educational presentations, lesson plans, teaching methods, creative educational input, proposal/grant support, research, maritime history

Financial Planning/Management:

Help plan and manage finances; help develop annual budgets; ensure required filings are complete, initiate ideas for new funding areas. Bank partnerships.

Business Planning:

Help develop and maintain plans for existing and future museum facilities; develop the business and strategic plans; maintain the plans via annual reviews.

Public Relations

(Newsletter, Social Media):

Interact with the public via newspapers, radio, television, and direct contact. Oversee the timely production and publication of four MMM Newsletters on a quarterly schedule as directed by the Board of Directors.

Community Liaison

Recruitment/Development:

Identify and recruit qualified candidates to partner with Board of Directors, Chairpersons, committees. Present nominations to the Board for approval; once approved, secure agreements to serve from the nominees.