

Jerald Horst: A Controversial Messenger

Jerald Horst might have more time for hunting and fishing when he retires, but the plight of the recreational and commercial fishermen he has advised since 1976 will continue to weigh heavily on his mind. In May, Horst plans to leave his post as professor of fisheries in the LSU School of Renewable Resources and Marine Extension specialist for Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU Agricultural Center.

"Louisiana's commercial fishermen have suffered a lot over the years," Horst said grimly. "The future for consumptive users is also worrisome."

The damage Hurricanes Katrina and Rita inflicted on homes, boats, gear and certain fisheries has deepened Horst's concern for both his constituents and the endangered culture of coastal Louisiana. The storms came on the heels of long-standing industry problems – domestic and foreign competition, high fuel prices and government regulations – which already had driven many seafood harvesters into other professions. The state's seafood processors have also felt the squeeze.

"They do what they can," Horst said.

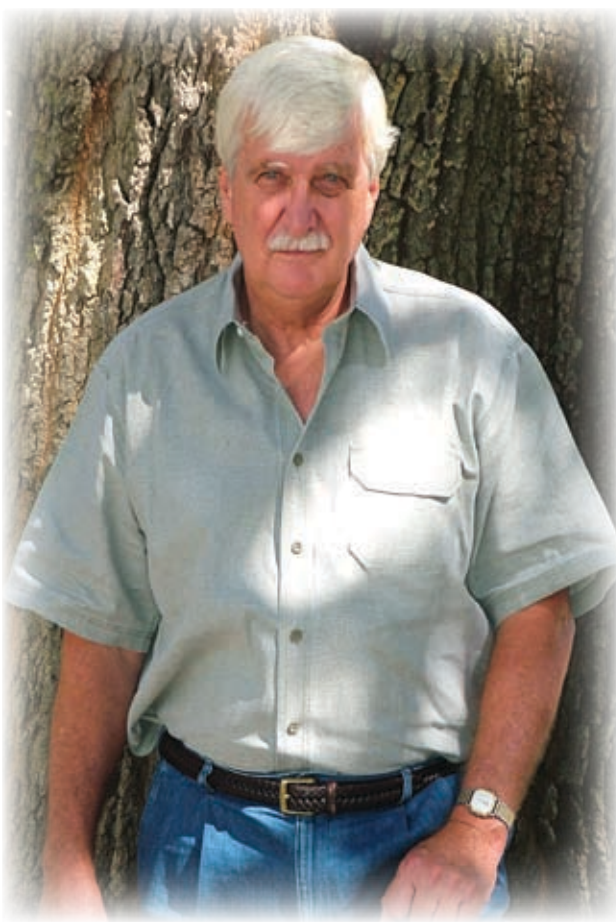
"There is a surprising stoicism among these people, but they don't have much choice. What else are they to do?"

Outspokenness on issues affecting both fisheries and fishermen is a Horst trademark in all three of his major missions as an agent – research, education and outreach.

"Jerald Horst has been a thought provoker on fisheries policy and management," said Ken Roberts, LSU AgCenter associate vice chancellor. "This takes a tough hide and someone committed to the review of change alternatives. Jerald lived professionally what he educated his audiences about so effectively – change is normal, yet there are ways to influence change rather than letting it happen to you."

Despite the difficulties of communicating the inevitability of change to constituents, colleagues and policy makers, Horst is unafraid of being the bearer of bad news or the herald of change.

"He has addressed, with assertiveness and courage, many topics people don't want to talk about and embrace," explained Paul Coreil, LSU AgCenter vice chancellor and Louisiana Cooperative Extension



Jerald Horst

Service director. "Anyone who does this will be controversial, and Jerald has been controversial.

"He challenged the conventional wisdom of the government, the university system and the fishermen. Jerald brought to the table innovation and the spirit of looking beyond the current issues."

Others in Extension, like Mike Liffmann, Louisiana Sea Grant associate executive director, admire Horst's dedication to his constituents. "No matter where Jerald's research took him, the needs of his constituents have driven Jerald's field activities since the early part of his career," Liffmann said.

In addition to field work, Horst strives to balance the needs of the environment and the people who rely on it by lending his expertise to numerous public policy tasks forces and industry advisory boards.

Woody Crews, a recreational fisherman, served with Horst on the Jefferson Marine Fisheries Advisory Board for about a decade. "Jerald took special care as a facilitator and charter member to keep advisory board members active and interested," Crews said. "He takes great delight

in the accomplishments of those he helped mature into leaders. Few other facilitators held their leadership development duties in such high stature. Jerald cared for the fishermen he came to know deeply."

Horst's outreach activities have touched scientists, students and journalists, as well as those who work and recreate in Louisiana's fisheries. Horst's research has resulted in several handbooks to improve both the profitability and people's understanding of aquatic resources.

Horst is a prolific author with nearly 80 fisheries-related pamphlets, guides and booklets to his name. He has kept constituents up-to-date on the latest research and legislation with his monthly *Lagniappe* newsletter since 1977 and has written a weekly column, "Fisheries Newsline," for *The Times-Picayune* since 1989. The general public has also benefited from the numerous facts sheets he has written.

"*Lagniappe* captured the history of the fishing industry and will be valuable to policy makers and resource managers for years in the

future as they address similar issues," Coreil said. "Jerald documented conflicts, and he has almost created a library of policy issues. In his commitment to writing, documenting and informing the public, no one came close to Jerald."

Horst is the president of the Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association, which he describes as one of his great passions and most rewarding professional pursuits. Other affiliations include membership in and past presidency of the Louisiana Association of Professional Biologists and membership in the American Fisheries Society: Louisiana Chapter. In 1997, he was named Conservation Educator of the Year by the Louisiana Wildlife Federation.

Colleagues agree that Horst has made his mark on Marine Extension.

"Anyone who has met him knows Jerald is a unique individual, to say the least," said Mark Schexnayder, a Louisiana Sea Grant/LSU AgCenter coastal advisor who has worked with Horst in Jefferson Parish for five years. "I could not have asked for a better mentor. His legacy will live on long after he exits the stage."



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COASTAL CLIPS

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Travelift Donated for Katrina, Rita Vessel Recovery Effort

A gift from Valdez, Alaska, is making a splash with fishermen in Plaquemines Parish. A 60-ton Marine Travelift, used to move fishing boats in and out of the water, was officially presented to the parish government on March 13.

Hundreds of fishing vessels were pushed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita into areas from which – when the storms subsided – they could no longer reach the sea. Federal, state and local governments, as well as private citizens, have been pulling boats from bayous, backyards and parking lots and repairing them on dry land in an Empire boatyard. But there has been no way to put the boats back into the water. The boatyard lost its launching

equipment in the storms, and new equipment could not be obtained quickly.

"The Coast Guard is continuing to bring in contractors to help with the recovery effort, but the entire process will take many more months," said Rusty Gaudé, a Marine Extension agent with Louisiana Sea Grant and the LSU Agricultural Center. "That timeframe is altogether too long in order to jump-start the commercial fishing industry. Thankfully, some of our Sea Grant colleagues in the northwest offered us assistance."

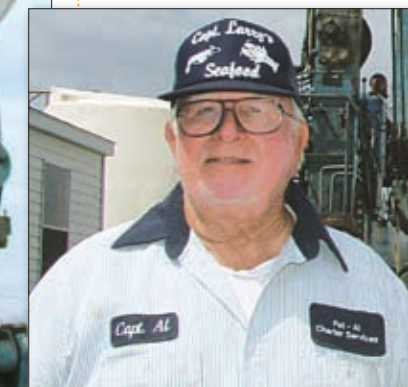
Through the combined efforts of Gaudé, the Washington and Alaska Sea Grant programs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Pacific Coast

Congress of Harbormasters (PCCH) and Valdez Port Director Alan Sorum, the idea of donating a surplus Travelift owned by the port and city of Valdez emerged. Other agencies and organizations involved in the acquisition include the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board. Additionally, the Alaska Fishing Industry Relief Mission, PCCH and Alaska Sea Grant contributed funding toward the effort.

The Valdez City Council approved the Travelift donation in December. Carlile Transportation Systems of Alaska provided transportation of the lift from Valdez to Houston and Packard Truck Lines of Plaquemines Parish transported the lift on the final leg of its 4,500-mile journey. Marine Travelift Corp. of Sturgeon Bay, Wis., contributed to the effort by providing the services of one of its technicians, Dennis Sargent, for disassembly and reassembly of the lift.

"The City of Valdez knows what it's like to survive a disaster. During the great Alaskan earthquake and tsunami of 1964, our entire community was destroyed. We never forgot the generosity others

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(Inset) Allen "Capt. Al" Kahoe Sr. of Harvey has owned and operated Pat-Al Charter Service for 47 years. Out of commission since Hurricane Katrina, Kahoe's fishing vessel was the first returned to the water in Empire using the donated Travelift. (Left) Russell Hayden gently guides Kahoe's 48-foot boat back to the water during the Travelift's official dedication ceremony March 13 in Empire.

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Sea Grant Legal Helps Storm Victims Navigate Regulations

The Louisiana Sea Grant Legal Program is developing a series of information sheets to help those affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita navigate Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) programs and related legal issues during the rebuilding process. The information sheets will be distributed to parish offices throughout south Louisiana and also will be available online at www.laseagrant.org.

"This project came about after our Extension program partners in the LSU AgCenter identified a need for a plainer explanation of FEMA reconstruction guidelines," said LSG Legal Program Director Jim Wilkins. "In many instances, specialized federal programs and documents are not only difficult for the general population to understand but also for many local authorities who've

never extensively dealt with a particular program before."

The information sheets, which will be available in April, will answer questions about where and how to rebuild, Louisiana's building codes, the National Flood Insurance Program and other reconstruction matters.

"These documents will play a critical role in helping people make rebuilding decisions," said Rod Emmer, executive director of the Louisiana Floodplain Management Association, who is working with LSG Legal on the project. "Homeowners must understand the basics of these programs, and then they will be better prepared to determine if they qualify for them. The increased cost of compliance is one such program that offers a way to better protect lives and property."

Travelift Donated . . .

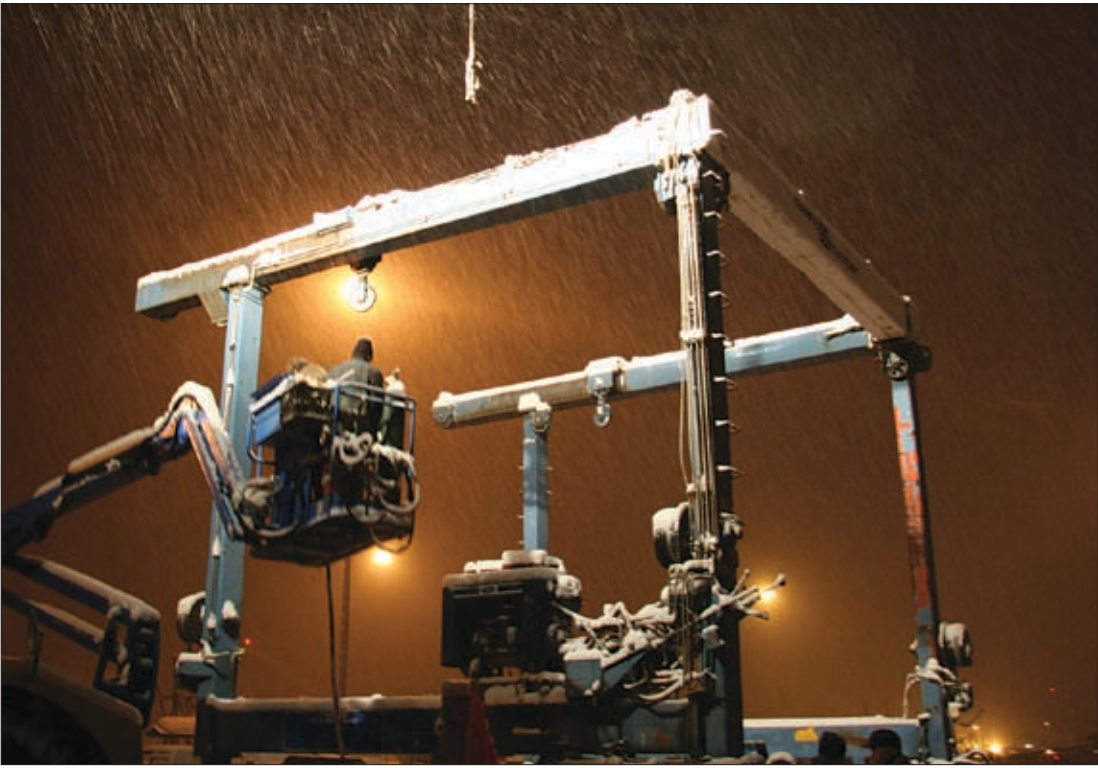
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showed to us in our time of need, so we really wanted to give something back now,” said Valdez Mayor Bert Cottle. “We recognize that getting working boats back in the water is a critical component of south Louisiana’s economy, and we’re very pleased to be able to help with that.”

Plaquemines Parish officials expressed their appreciation for the Travelift. “We have experienced great devastation in our parish due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita,” said Parish President Benny Rousselle. “Out of all the economic sectors affected, the commercial fishing community has been the hardest hit. Many of these fishermen have nothing left except their boats. This contribution from the City of Valdez is vital to the rebuilding of our commercial fishing economy. I don’t know how to thank them enough. The value of this donation is beyond words.”



The Travelift was disassembled in February in frigid, snowy conditions at temperatures of around 18 degrees Fahrenheit in Valdez, Alaska. Photos courtesy Steve Revis



Storm Surge Maps Aid in Rebuilding Decisions

Using satellite images, ground truthing and geographic information systems (GIS), Louisiana Sea Grant Marine Extension agent Thomas Hymel has developed Hurricane Rita storm surge maps for St. Mary, Iberia and Vermilion parishes.

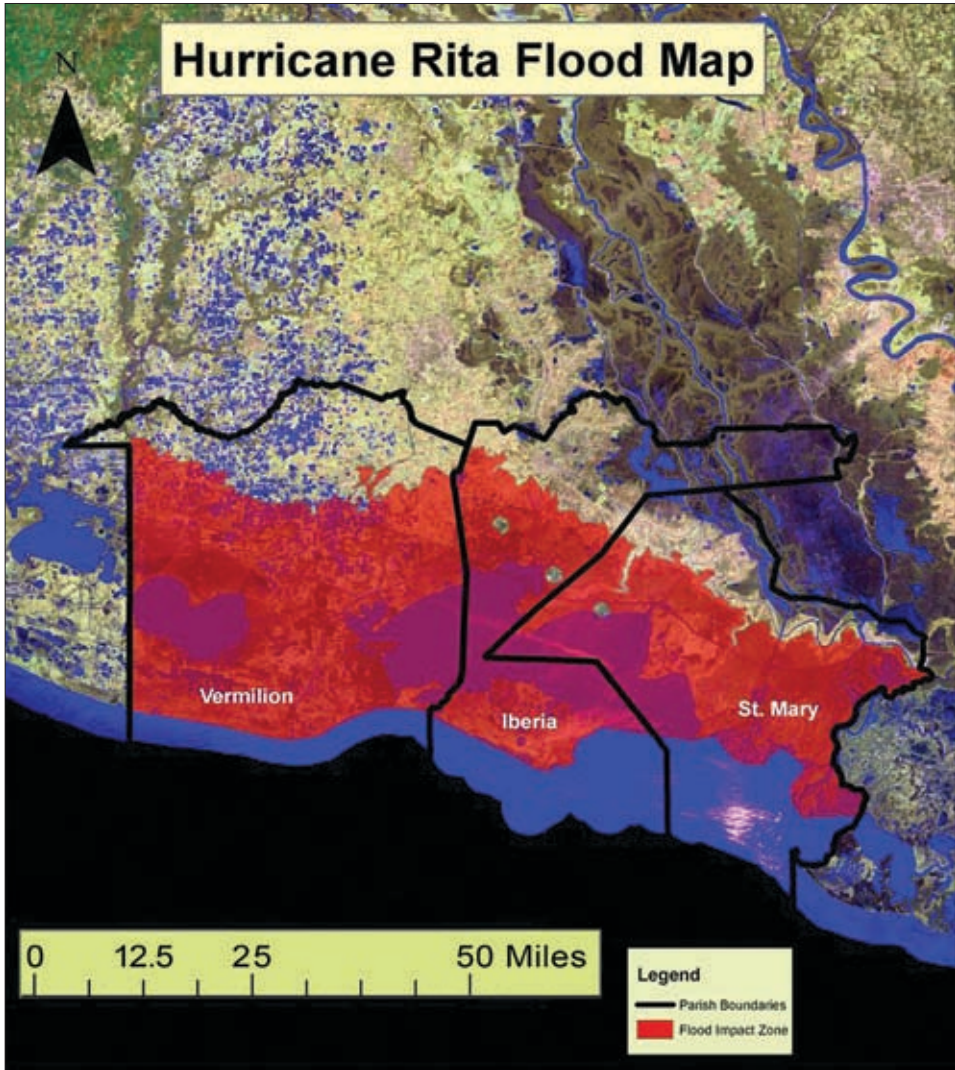
Originally created to help the agriculture industry (such as rice and crawfish farmers) assess damages and lobby for state and federal assistance, the maps have caught the interest of the insurance industry, homeowners and schoolchildren. “It’s been an amazing response,” said Hymel.

“The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) wants to use the

maps in future planning efforts dealing with large storm surges. Homeowners want them to see the flooding impact beyond their immediate neighborhoods. Students are using them for science projects,” he said.

Hymel also is using the data as an educational tool to show residents how much damage could have occurred if the storm surge had been greater and what could happen in future storms.

“We recognized the importance of creating the maps to help in making decisions about crops, housing and rebuilding,” Hymel said. “Only two weeks following Rita, we developed the first usable flood map for those purposes.”



Louisiana Sea Grant’s Ronald Becker Honored with Lifetime Achievement Award

Ron Becker, associate executive director of the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, is the first recipient of the American Fisheries Society-Louisiana Chapter Lifetime Achievement Award.

“It’s an honor to salute Ron for all that he’s done for the state’s fisheries,” said Glenn Thomas, Louisiana AFS’ immediate past president. “It’s hard to put in a few words what Ron has accomplished in more than 30 years. He has an incredible talent for recognizing scientists and research that can make a difference and then supporting those efforts.”

The award was presented Feb. 1 during the annual joint meeting of the Louisiana and Mississippi AFS chapters.

“Ron has been a ‘behind the scenes,’ unsung hero of the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program since its inception,” said LSG Executive Director Charles “Chuck” Wilson. “His insight and energy have been a driving force in the strategic investments that Sea Grant has made in science and scientists over the past three and one-half decades. Yet, Ron has never sought credit for the hard work and extra time that he has contributed to shaping the coastal science community of Louisiana.”



Ron Becker

ULL Grad Student Researches Shrimp Pheromones



Jodi Caskey tends to shrimp that will be used in pheromone research.

Jodi Caskey looks forward to the day when her son and daughter can proudly call her “Doctor Mom.” Already inspiring her children’s desire for higher education with her research and graduate studies, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL) doctoral student hopes to have a similar impact on college-aged students.

Caskey is the principal research assistant for ULL biology professor Ray Bauer on a Louisiana Sea Grant-sponsored project. Bauer and his team are characterizing, isolating and identifying contact sex pheromones in the common grass shrimp.

“There’s a lot of literature on sex pheromones in insects, but not much on crustaceans,” Caskey said. “So we used the insect research as the starting point for our work with shrimp.”

“I can see some potential aquaculture applications from our research. Making females more attractive to males so they’re interested in mating certainly would help with cultivating shrimp. Developing a pheromone-based bait also could reduce the need for trawl fishing and the related by-catch problems,” she added.

Although those would-be outcomes are likely years away, Caskey and Bauer are establishing the foundation for them as well as other related research. “Right now, this is cutting-edge work,” Caskey said. “But what we discover today will be common, textbook knowledge 20 years from now.”

Some of the research team’s initial findings indicate that female shrimp are at their highest sexual attraction within two hours after they molt. Beyond two hours, the male’s interest in the female begins to decrease. Eight hours postmolt, males have virtually no interest in mating.

Additionally, males don’t appear to visually recognize sexually receptive females, nor is it likely that olfactory pheromones are involved in the mating process. Evidence suggests the males are responding to an insoluble contact sex pheromone.

Caskey co-authored, with Bauer, “Behavioral Tests for a Possible Contact Sex Pheromone in the Caridean Shrimp *Palaemonetes Pugio*,” published in the November 2005 edition of the *Journal of Crustacean Biology*. “Jodi has another paper submitted and it’s currently in review,” said Bauer.

“She’s doing excellent work,” he added. The next phase of her research is identifying the male’s contact pheromone receptors.

When Caskey completes her doctorate in 2008, she hopes to find a teaching and research position in the Pacific Northwest and to stir a passion for research in her students as she has in her children.

“My children already want to know if they can call me ‘Doctor Mom.’ I’ve told them not just yet,” she said.

Supporting an Economic Safe Harbor

With funding support from NOAA’s Coastal Services Center, Louisiana Sea Grant has recommitted to supporting the state’s maritime ports by establishing the Louisiana Coastal Ports Extension Project.

Louisiana leads the nation in total shipping tonnage, handling more than 450 million tons of cargo each year, and the ports along the lower Mississippi River are the largest by volume in the world. The state’s coastal ports are a vital link for offshore oil and gas and commercial fisheries. One study estimates that Louisiana ports account for 270,000 jobs and add almost \$33 billion to the state economy annually.

“Our ports and marine transportation system are of vital economic importance,” explained Mike Liffmann, LSG associate executive director. “Our goal is to provide focused educational programming to this very important audience. We also want to encourage researchers and Extension faculty to use their expertise and skills to help solve many of the environmental challenges confronting the state’s ports.”

During the 1980s and 1990s, LSG’s Ports and Waterways Advisory Services served a similar function with specialists providing technology-based information to ports and harbors, assisting with economic and planning issues for smaller ports, and addressing non-maritime uses of waterfronts. Liffmann said rising concerns over issues like coastal restoration and compliance with environmental regulations reignited LSG’s focus on ports.

Coastal Ports Specialist Justin Farrell joined the LSG staff in April 2005 and immediately began working with the Ports

Association of Louisiana (PAL), a group of port and shipping industry professionals who advocate for the state’s ports

interests. He meets regularly with PAL members and contributes articles for the association’s newsletter, *News From the Docks*.

Since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Farrell has partnered with Louisiana Sea Grant/LSU Agricultural Center Extension agent Rusty Gaudé and others on boat salvage and recovery and marine debris issues. Soon after the storms, Farrell published a white paper detailing damages to and the status of the state’s port

facilities. He also assisted PAL in disseminating news releases to the media.

“I’m extremely interested in the role ports will play in the state’s recovery from the hurricanes,” Farrell said. “I’m also looking forward to conducting my own applied research projects that can inform and guide the ports community on other issues along the Gulf coast.”

Two of Farrell’s main research interests are portfields and liquid natural gas (LNG) development. The NOAA Portfields Initiative seeks to redevelop environmentally compromised waterfronts. In the wake of Katrina and Rita, NOAA has added the lower Mississippi River port complex in southeastern Louisiana as the initiative’s fourth pilot project. Farrell said the region was chosen due to the overall value federal assistance can add to the area’s recovery and redevelopment effort. In addition to portfields, Farrell plans to explore community planning and environmental management issues surrounding LNG traffic on the Calcasieu River and environmental impacts of LNG operations and development in Lake Charles and other areas of the state.

Updated information on the Louisiana Coastal Ports Extension Project is available online at www.laseagrant.org/adserv/ports.htm.

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Justin Farrell