

PROTEUS AT GANGPLANK

On the morning of September 9th, the experimental vessel *Proteus* entered the K- Dock slipway on the final stop of her "One Ocean Mission" sponsored by NOAA's Marine Sanctuary Program. Built and launched at Puget Sound by Marine Advanced Research Inc. of El Cerrito, California, in 2006, *Proteus* began her maiden voyage in 2007, from her home port in San Francisco, followed by calls on the Festival de Cannes, France, Italy (Italian Department of the Environment) and New York City.

At 100' LOA and 50' beam *Proteus* is the first full scale wave adaptable modular vessel ("WAM-V"). Described as revolutionary by some commentators, *Proteus'* crew views her as the desirable characteristics of inflatables—flexibility, stability and a "soft" forgiving hull-- projected onto a vessel with ocean crossing capability. Among other firsts, such a projection required the largest pontoons every constructed.

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being dug); and (6) Recommendations have been made to area food service providers to modify their methods of disposal. These efforts are helping. Our pest control technician stated he had observed an increase in flies from the burrow openings – this is good – it is an indication that the rats are returning to their burrows and dying there.

RACCOONS. Although considered cute and not a pest by some, these are indeed pests in the marina setting. They have boarded vessels and left waste and damage. They have torn into properly disposed of trash bags and left food on the docks for their friends the rats. What are we doing? Using humane traps and cat food for bait, we have managed to trap two raccoons near 'A' dock. They were subsequently picked up by DC Animal Control. However, we hear rumors that there might be more of these critters in the marina. If you sight a raccoon on the docks, please advise Security and we will again place humane traps on the dock.

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The artist Banksy's Paparazzi - in London

NIGHT SQUIRRELS (AKA RATS)

The rat population at the marina and in SW DC has recently increased. This is due to peripheral activity (construction) in the Southwest. **What is the marina doing?**

(1) Bait stations have increased in number; (2) Burrows have been collapsed and the immediate area dusted; (3) Debris has been cleared from the "runs" under the storage bins in

the south end of the parking lot; (4) Brush in the parking lot has been trimmed up off the ground to decrease nesting areas; (5) Pebbles will be placed in the rat's burrowing areas (burrows cannot be dug in pebbles since they collapse in to close any holes

GUNBOATS ON THE POTOMAC



The *William Farden* entered the Marina on September 26. A joint venture between Aluminum Chambered Boats and Northrop Grumman, the vessel is a one-off prototype built in response to a Navy Request for Information (RFI). Constructed in Bellingham, Washington in ten months, it was transported and launched in May in Norfolk.

The *William Farden's* mission systems (imaging, sensors, communications and weapons) are supplied by Northrop Grumman and are undergoing evaluation by the Navy and Department of Homeland Security. The *William Farden* is docked at F-28 and will depart on October 11. And, in case you're wondering, they have a note from the Coast Guard which permits them to mount a .50 cal. Gatling Gun mock up atop the pilothouse.

FALL IS HERE WINTER IS COMING: 'TIS THE SEASON TO CLEAN YOUR DOCK, TURN YOUR THOUGHTS TO WINTERIZING YOUR VESSEL AND, FOR LIVEBOARDS, THE JOYS OF WINTER WATER

As the boating (and growing) season comes to an end, our Maintenance Director (and Dockmaster) would like to remind you to remove your planters, hoses and excess line from the docks and place these items on your vessel. Within thirty days, we could begin to experience freezing rain and or snow. After such events, many slipholders complain that they find their hoses and excess lines dangling in the water when they were coiled on the dock.

Now is the time to begin to keep excess dock lines coiled on your vessel as well as your hoses and shore power cords. When the Marina receives freezing precipitation, all Marina Staff turns out to clean the docks. The removal of snow and sleet is greatly facilitated by having all of the docks clear of these items. When left on the dock, these items will frequently end up in the water given the amount of surface area that has to be shoveled rapidly.

For Slipholders who have never kept their vessel in the water during a Washington winter (or who have never been this far north during the winter), you need to plan on winterizing your vessel. Although fabulous weather may extend into December (as it did last year), it is a certainty we will freeze. Last year, five vessels attempted to sink. Four of these could have and should have been prevented by simply closing sea cocks. This of course will not winterize your vessel but it may prevent the ugly scenario of hundreds of gallons of 33 degree water in a cabin connected to shore power at 2:00 a.m. Winterizing can be accomplished by those with even modest mechanical and marine knowledge. If you have questions on winterizing your vessel, please contact the Dockmaster now before he calls you on a cold winter night that your vessel is in danger of sinking. More about the joys of winter in next month's Newsletter.

NIGHT SQUIRRELS (AKA RATS) (continued from page 1)

What can you do to assist marina staff in decreasing the population of pests in and around the marina? Put your trash bags in (not on or near) a trash can. If the can is full, deposit it in the nearest can that has room to hold your trash bag. This will not keep all pests from getting into the trash, but it will decrease the incidence. Do not store your trash on the deck of your boat – even overnight 'til it is convenient to take it to the trash

can. Do not feed your pets outside or place food on the docks – even for the cute little birdies and duckies. The residue ends up being food for unwanted pests. [What is the DC government doing to help out?](http://doh.dc.gov/doh/cwp/view,a,1370,q,574962,dohNav_GID,1787,dohNav,%7C33139%7C,.asp) You can go to the DC DOH Bureau of Community Hygiene Rodent Control Division website (http://doh.dc.gov/doh/cwp/view,a,1370,q,574962,dohNav_GID,1787,dohNav,%7C33139%7C,.asp) for info on DC's efforts in this area.

PROTEUS AT GANGPLANK (continued from page 1)

Earlier prototypes, half *Proteus'* size were designed by Ugo Conti and built by Conti and *Proteus'* Chief Engineer, Mark Gunderson. The first of these broke up fifteen minutes into its sea trial. For Marine Advanced Research this setback was merely a learning exercise—too much flexibility is not a good thing.

Initially trained as an electrical engineer, Conti holds PhDs from the University of Rome and UC Berkley; this formal training has never impinged upon his outside of the box designs particularly, in his design of vessels. As Conti noted at Cantina Marina, whatever the application, be it circuits or ocean going vessels, the ultimate design "must be simple but, more importantly, it must be elegant." For Conti, the ultimate design must likewise possess an aesthetic component. "Aesthetics are very important to me. They are the most important thing."



After completing a three-year circumnavigation with his wife Isabella in the early 70's (Isabella is likewise a PhD) on their 50' ketch *Phoebus*, Conti returned to teaching at UC Berkley. There he explains, "I had a midlife crisis. To resolve it, I could have purchased a red convertible, left family and friends and fallen desperately in love with a beautiful twenty-year-old woman. I would have piled illusion upon illusion. I would have learned nothing. Instead, I sailed alone for a while with my boat."

The boat, the first of Conti's inflatable designs, was the MTS, an inflatable sailboat with a

double boom sail plan (enabling it to mimic a square-rigger) taking advantage of the westerly trade winds. His introduction to naval architecture brought with it a steep learning curve. The bow, keel and aft deck required reinforcement with tubular aluminum infrastructure which, Conti was required to fabricate in his garage and donated machine shop space and weld with a jury-rigged arc welder. He then had to teach himself aluminum welding. Things did not go well at first. "The object laid in the workbench was useless. It was inhabited –I was convinced–by a cruel genie who enjoyed bending the metal in the wrong direction. Trying to correct mistakes I made things worse. After hours of work, I was often so demoralized I had tears in my eyes."

The "sail[ing]" alone in my boat" part of Conti's solution manifested itself as a Pacific crossing from Moro Bay, California to Hilo, Hawaii. This voyage, recounted in Conti's award winning book is now in its second Italian printing. *Crazy by Design, Stories of an Occasional Sailor*. While set in a twenty-day solo voyage in the Pacific aboard a revolutionary sailboat—is really the story of one individual's adaptations to the waves encountered in life.



*Ugo Conti and Mark Gunderson
re-securing Proteus' pontoon lashings*

Sitting onboard *Proteus'* three-man crew module, Conti's and Gunderson's aluminum fabrication skills are apparent. The interior is clean angular and minimalist. It is comprised entirely of polyester stretched over aluminum tubes with foam insulation glued to interior surfaces. The space is reminiscent of an ocean-racing sailboat minus the pipe berths. The bridge contains no wheel but, two joysticks, three captain's chairs, a chart plotter and a few gauges to monitor engine performance. Walking across *Proteus'* topside is the equivalent to walking across a trampoline, virtually nothing but her bridge deck and legs are fixed. Everything else remains flexible. Says Conti, "[*Proteus*] represents everything I learned from sailing *MTS*." The lessons learned are

simple and straightforward: a very shallow draft, a "soft" forgiving hull and high stability (due to length to beam ratio). In combining these qualities on a massive scale with modular components (interchangeable engine pods and payloads) the visitor is left with the distinct impression Conti has achieved a new type of vessel with a striking appearance that has captured the world's attention. For several days after her appearance in New York City Google recorded more hits for *Proteus* photos than any other image on the web.

Back at Cantina, Gunderson reveals his own blue water engineering experience, accumulated since childhood with the Alaskan fishing fleets in the Bering Sea. He came to Marine Advanced Research after completing his engineering studies at Stanford. When Marine Advanced Research revealed their plans to construct what is now *Proteus*, Gunderson was struck with single-minded purpose—"I have to be a part of this." Conti explains, "When we started we had to explain to Mark there was no security in this job. There were no guarantees. Mark [has proved to be] an absolutely perfect human being ... absolutely perfect ... except he attended Stanford." When queried about Gunderson concerns when *Proteus* is at sea, a recurring theme in Conti's book, Gunderson is reticent. Present at the creation as a co-builder he asserts he has no fears.

Upon being joined by Isabella, Ugo Conti confides once the design was complete and investment capital assembled, *Proteus* took little time to construct. Gesturing to *Proteus*, he is careful to add, "None of this would have been possible without Isabella." Asked when he became aware the full-scale prototype's proportions would assume such enormity he exclaims "immediately." While *Proteus* length and beam were quickly arrived at its configuration was more evasive. Initially envisioning fourteen "legs" this was paired to six, owing to Conti's study and admiration of ants "what they can do is incredible" and the aesthetic appearance six legs would provide. Ultimately, when it was demonstrated four legs could provide the desired articulation, function triumphed over form.

The question remained, did Conti anticipate the world would adopt his design to the exclusion of traditional rigid hull vessels. In response, Conti invoked the appearance of the helicopter in aviation drawing the analogy the helicopter was never designed to replace fixed wing aircraft. So too he views WAM-V technology. "This is not a replacement for other vessels. This opens other possibilities that are not presently available." Earlier Conti had made a related point noting, "*Proteus* at present is not capable of performing any mission, it cannot be used as XYZ, [*Proteus*] is merely a platform for the technology."

Proteus and her crew will depart the Marina on October 17, to winter with the Navy where she will undergo further study.

ORANGE CARDS CUSTOMER QUESTIONNAIRES

The orange comment or customer questionnaire cards are sent out quarterly and were sent out with the September statements. We received a lot of thoughtful requests, comments, and questions. Below are some of the issues raised by slipholders.

Q: Would it be possible to have nets on the pier so we could remove debris from the water?

A: Providing nets would be a liability issue. If someone used the net we left for out to remove debris from the river and then fell in, we could be held liable for injuries sustained. Staff removes debris from the river almost daily – certainly many times each week. We have requested that the city clean out the storm drains in the parking lot. A lot of debris builds up there, and, once it rains, that debris flows into the river.

Q: Could there be a mention in the newsletter that people should return carts after their use for others?

A: Yes, please do return carts as soon as you are finished using it at your slip. Carts on finger piers

and lettered docks have been blown or knocked into the water. When the marina knows this, we ask the divers to retrieve the carts for us. The purchase of a few new carts has been budgeted for the new fiscal year.

Q: How about getting a new gas grill?

A: Your wish is our command. Two new stainless steel gas grills have been purchased and put in place – one on the event barge at the end of K dock and another on the small barge near the main entrance to the marina. We ask that the slipholders who use the grills please help keep them clean so they have a long life. The marina provides fuel and the grills for slipholders' use since there is no open-flame grilling allowed on vessels or in the main areas of the marina.

Q: The used paper towel container in the men's room seems to always be overflowing. Trash collection could be improved.

A: We brought these issues to the attention of the cleaning crew and requested that they empty receptacles at a greater frequency.

Q: Is there a paper recycling facility?

A: The Gangplank's trash/recycle pickup vendor allows us to commingle recyclables. The green bins at the end of each dock are for acceptable recyclable materials.

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