

CHARLES K. CHIODI ... a tribute and flood of memories, as submitted to MM - Jan 14<sup>th</sup> 2015

It is with great sadness that we learn and must accept, that dear Charles has now passed on. What a driving force he was back in the 1970's to keep that *Multihull Magazine* coming out every quarter and how many of us could not wait to see what gems he had collected up for the next issue! I still have many issues from that period and even today, the contents are still remarkably valid and certainly fascinating to read. This was before the days of glitzy charter catamarans and glossy colored pages. Charles was a character all right ... and not afraid to speak his mind if someone wrote in with something contrary. Chippy as he could be on occasion ... no doubt a carry-over from the strong character he'd needed to survive German and Russian occupations in his native Hungary during WWII as a young man ... it made the magazine totally enjoyable to read and full of undeniable character. He was very funny too and certainly had his own way of doing things. One example was that he insisted that the date of his magazine was the one that applied to the information in it, not 1 or 2 months later at some artificial *delivery* date that most other magazines used ... and still do. This initially caused some subscribers to complain that their November issue had only arrived in early January - but most of us smiled and just got used to it. In the early 70's, Charles also got into building one of the early ply-on-frame designs and although it apparently took him longer than he first figured (about 2,500 hours), his personal masterpiece was finally pictured on the cover of the newly numbered Vol 1 #4 (Summer 1975) edition of MM, with 8 young ladies laid out sunbathing in bikinis, to demo the expansive deck ;-). So devoted to the magazine was he, that he called his boat, the 'Multihull Magazine's trimaran'. Years later, with the respect he now commanded, he would have the chance to sail on any luxury catamaran he chose and he took advantage of many of those opportunities.

In order to place the work of Charles in perspective, let's take short trip together down memory lane and recall what was going on, where and by whom.

As a teenager, I was an early member of the AYRS in the UK, edited by John Morwood. Many of the ideas printed at that time were pretty crazy, 'off -the-charts' and technically not feasible, but they sure got the juices running. But I was designing, building and racing dinghies at the time and was merely 'intrigued' with what I saw of multihulls in Britain in the 50's, despite the fact that James Wharram was already preparing to cross the Atlantic in his Polynesian-style 23' cat 'Tangaroa'. It was only later, while in Canada designing ships, that I started to take multihulls more seriously. By then, I had graduated in naval architecture and the concept of a sailboat lugging a huge lead keel around with the extra hull needed to support it, seemed so counter to overall efficiency that I started to look at options. Arthur Piver's designs were popping up all over and some making long voyages. Aside from Pacific influences in Hawai where Rudy Choy was a prominent

design figure with this asymmetrical cats, there were two areas in continental North America that were leading the way and one was in New England (Mass) where Charles became Commodore of the fledgling New England Multihull Association (NEMA) and others on the Great Lakes - where there were enthusiastic groups on Lake Michigan (LMYA) and Lake Ontario, centered around Toronto, Canada.

The first *Multihull Magazines* from Charles must date back to the mid 1960's as I see the early issues of 1976 were already labelled as 'Volume 10'. Later, Charles changed this to Vol 1 as with interest now coming from California, Florida and the North-West, it no longer made sense to link the magazine to New England, as were the early issues. Back in those days, Charles did a lot of writing himself and while some things have changed since those days, it's clear from these articles that he understood much of the differences of each design and was able to write things down in a way that wet the appetite of the reader and got them enthused about their own build projects. Mind you, to be fair to the reader, he was not always proven right. In his inimitable direct style, he once wrote: "Trimarans below 24ft are a misfit and should not be in existence" .. hmm! But a few months later he was persuaded to swallow that comment and many years later, I believe he actually bought a small Windrider 17.

Initially, there were very few places to get a multihull built professionally and most of the building was on a one-off basis - often by amateurs. So *Multihulls Magazine* fed that need with lots of do-it-yourself articles as well as fascinating contributions by designers such as Richard Boemer, Brian Eiland, Dick Newick, Robert Harris, Vance Buhler, Andrew Simpson, Joe Dobler, Bernie Rodriguez, Ed Horstman, Hugo Myers, Norm Cross, Jim Brown, Jay Kantola and others I can no longer recall ... several coming to multihull design after working in the aircraft industry ... which in structural aspects, is often closer to the needs of a multihull than anything learned from monohull structures. Pictures were B&W of course, but that tended to concentrate the reader on the detail rather than the glitz, and there was generally a dedicated 'Design Section' that was full of new ideas in each issue.

By 1975, Charles knew many designers around the globe and dreamed of getting them together for a debate. Derek Kelsall, Jim Brown, James Wharram, Rod MacAlpine, and Lock Crowther in Australia were prime prospects. Cox Marine in the UK were building Piver trimarans and Canadian Multihull Services (CMS) had become agents for designs by Cross, Brown, Wharram and Crowther. So it was natural that Charles, along with Pat and Jillian McGrath of CMS, would plan the first World Symposium on Multihulls for Toronto, Canada. It was finally held in June 1976 at the Harbour Castle Hotel in the inner harbor and lasted four days. It was an amazing experience and it was there that I finally became convinced that multihulls were here to stay and also met Charles, for the first of several occasions. The Moderator was 'nobby' Clarke of Cox Marine (UK) and the Panel was made up of internationally recognized designers, builders and sailors, and after

presentations from 9 to 4pm, each designer had their own meeting room, to give participants the chance to have one-on-one discussion about particular designs.

Jim Brown, Norm Cross, Ed Horstman, Hugo Myers, Tom Roland, Andrew Simpson and Dick Newick were there from the US. Pat McGrath and Robert Harris from Canada. Derek Kelsall, James Wharram and Rod MacAlpine-Downie from the UK; Andre Allegre from France and Lock Crowther from Australia.

It was a huge turning point in the acceptance and development of multihulls in the world and we should all long remember both Charles and the McGraths, for making that happen. (Pat McGrath was and still is a Crowther fan and often comments on 'things multihull' on the BoatDesign.net forums).

So one thing is certain in my view, **Charles Chiodi** clearly deserves a place in any '*Multihull Hall of Fame*', not only as the founder of Multihulls Magazine and Chief Editor for well over 40 years, but as the determined enthusiast who finally brought all the great minds together for that very first World Symposium on Multihulls. That to me will remain his main multihull legacy, as the friendships and exchange of ideas that started there, brought about a significant improvement of the breed and more acceptance of multihulls in general. Without that, each continent and designer was working mainly in isolation and the rising differences of opinion did little to encourage *monohullers* to step into the new world of stability, space and performance that we now enjoy.

We will all miss you Charles, but R.I.P.

Some of the articles from those early days are still valid today and make fascinating reading. I believe it would make great reading if *Multihull Magazine* would reprint one of the archived articles in each of their modern issues - and see how readers like them. The 3 part article by Jim Brown on the capsize of *Meridian* in a hurricane, would be good for starters.

Perhaps reprints of that first Symposium are still available from Multihull Magazine.

Mike Waters, n.a.  
[www.smalltridesign.com](http://www.smalltridesign.com)