

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

5 An improved ship docking vessel is provided that has a substantially flat, elliptical bottom having a large beam-to-length ratio to provide a shallow draft. In addition, the vessel of the present invention is provided with two Z-drives disposed diagonally opposite the longitudinal axis of the bottom. Each of the drives is adapted to rotate 360° about its central shaft. Because there is no keel, the vessel is provided with a pair of skegs disposed fore and aft along the center line of the longitudinal axis of the substantially flat bottom. The skegs are disposed outside the Z-drives and provide for enhanced maneuverability and increased directional stability of the vessel. In a preferred embodiment, the flat bottom has curved ends and parallel sides, and the entire flat bottom is longitudinally and transversely symmetrical. The hull includes a substantially uniform flare between the flat bottom and the flat bumper portion to facilitate movement of the vessel in any direction and to improve vessel stability. The skegs extend below the drives to protect them from bottoming out and to act as support for the hull when the vessel is dry-docked. In an alternative embodiment, a cycloidal drive system may be used instead of the Z-drive system.

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