

SAM McBRIDE REVISITED

Readers will recall that, in the November issue, we presented a feature intended to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the construction of the double-ended, diesel-powered, Toronto Island passenger ferry SAM McBRIDE. We felt that it was all the more important that we do so in that the Metropolitan Toronto Parks & Property Department, operator of the Island ferry service, made no effort at all to observe the anniversary.

We have noted that two "typographical" errors (or mind lapses on the part of the Editor/typist) crept into the article and passed the proofreading process undetected. The first occurred in the name of the captain of the McBRIDE at the time of her "misunderstanding" with TRILLIUM in July of 1943; his name was properly spelled Stryker, and not as we printed it. The second error was in the date of her recent grounding at Whitby. The incident, of course, occurred on October 23rd, and not in September!

The SAM did not suffer any major damage in the Whitby grounding, and after going back on the McNamara drydock after CHARLES R. HUNTLEY was finished there, she was re-inspected. She returned to Toronto under her own power on October 31st (as a Halloween surprise?) and since then she has had her main deck cabin windows ripped out and steel plating placed over the cabin sides in preparation for the installation of new and more useful windows. The old wooden-framed, drop-sash windows had become almost impossible to open (fun indeed on blistering hot summer days with capacity crowds aboard) and even more difficult to close (especially if a sudden thunderstorm should strike).

In respect of the McBRIDE's altercation with an aircraft during World War Two, Capt. John Leonard, a former Island resident, has managed to come up with a photo from his collection, which is featured on this month's photo-page. It came from the photo library of the Toronto Transportation (later "Transit") Commission, although we do not recall having seen it there ourselves, and was dated June 20, 1941. Its caption indicated that it was taken "after two members of the Royal Norwegian Air Force, Lt. Finn Kjos and Student Pilot Trond Harsvik, in their Northrope Patrol Bomber, crashed on the upper deck".

The Norwegian pilots were training from what became known as "Little Norway", billeted in the Stanley Barracks at the Canadian National Exhibition grounds (one building of which survives today as the Marine Museum of Upper Canada), and flying out of the Toronto Island Airport. Their seaplane, among those known familiarly as "Lysanders" (whether that terminology was correct or not), wrecked one of the McBRIDE's lifeboats, dented her stack, and caused damage to one pilothouse and a mast, in addition to other miscellaneous deck gear. The McBRIDE and her passengers were indeed fortunate that the plane struck only a glancing blow on the boat deck and did not run full-tilt into the side of the ferry's superstructure. Had it done so, we might not now be celebrating any anniversary at all...

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ADDITIONAL MARINE NEWS

-- The ferry DRUMMOND ISLANDER III, completing her delivery voyage from Mississippi, arrived at DeTour, Michigan, at 5:00 a.m. on November 6th, and since has entered regular service.

-- The twin Mackinac Island catamaran ferries MACKINAC EXPRESS and ISLAND EXPRESS arrived at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, on November 2 and, on November 5, went on the Twin City drydock where they are to spend the winter.

-- As already noted, the month of November brought some severe weather to the lakes. Shipping all around the lakes was interrupted on November 20 and 21 when a cold front went through with violent winds. We know of no serious vessel damage which occurred, but winds hit 75 m.p.h. at the Soo...

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