

MARINE NEWS

In the years preceding the opening of the new St. Lawrence canals in 1959, lake shipping enthusiasts were generally unfamiliar with ocean-going ships, and the majority of the salt-water vessels trading into the lakes were those built especially for operation through the old canals by long-established line services, such as Oranje Lijn, Fjell Lines (Olsen & Ugelstad), Faber Line, Manchester Liners, Sartori & Berger, Schulte, Hamburg Chicago, and Swedish Chicago. Their ships were generally kept in spotless condition, and many offered passenger accommodation. But when the new Seaway opened, there was an immediate influx of ocean tramp ships, most heading into the lakes to pick up cargoes of grain. These ships flew many strange (to us) flags, and the ships themselves were of all types. Among them were many old wartime-built Liberty and Victory ships, by then being run on a "shoestring" by Greek owners and flying the Liberian flag. Who can forget "rust-buckets" like the Liberty ships GLORIANA and PERICLES?

Now comes word that a Liberty Ship will once again be in the Great Lakes during the year 2000. One of the two preserved Liberties, the Baltimore-based JOHN W. BROWN, built in 1942, will come to the lakes for drydocking by the Toledo Shiprepair Company (a Manitowoc Marine Group division). Beginning in the spring, the Toledo shipyard will replace the aging rivets in the BROWN's hull, thus ensuring her an extended life. The job is expected to take 51 days, and then, from July 20 through August 21, JOHN W. BROWN will visit a number of lower lake ports, before returning to Baltimore.

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Last issue, we mentioned that the Thor Dahl (C.C.A.L.) salty THORSCAPE was swinging at anchor in Toronto Harbour, awaiting takeover by new owners. Her replacement, THORSHOPE, already had made her maiden appearance on the lakes. The second new C.C.A.L. ship, THORSLAKE (replacing THOR 1) has also begun her line service between lake ports and South Africa, and still THORSCAPE lies in Toronto Bay. It would appear that the new owners have not been able to arrange a charter for the ship, and there even has been some suggestion that she may remain here over the coming winter. After two months, THORSCAPE is a familiar sight on our Bay, but we would rather see her in service.

As of June 30th, 1999, the USS Great Lakes Fleet Inc. assumed full ownership of the Great Lakes Corp. The principal asset involved in the transfer was the 1,000-foot, self-unloading, tug/barge combination PRESQUE ISLE, which was built in 1973, the tug by Halter Marine Services Inc. at New Orleans, and the hull of the barge by Erie Marine at Erie, Pennsylvania. (The barge's bow was built in 1972 by the Defoe Shipbuilding Company at Bay City, Michigan.) The original owner of the tug/barge was the Litton Great Lakes Corporation, which chartered her for a 25-year-period to the United States Steel Corporation, Great Lakes Fleet, antecedent of the current owner. The day after the ownership change, the PRESQUE ISLE's tug section went on the drydock at Port Weller for her regular five-year survey and inspection, Port Weller being one of the few yards capable of docking a vessel with the tug's extreme draft. The tug was on the dock for most of the month of July.

Around midnight on August 6th, a bill removing one of the last financial obstacles to the construction of a new "Poe-sized" lock at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, passed both houses of the U.S. Congress. The bill does not provide funding for the project, first proposed in 1982, as the Corps of Engineers must insert the necessary \$225 million into its budget, but it does give the Great Lakes states, including Michigan, fifty years to repay their respective shares of the \$65 million "local share" required for all federal water projects. All but one of the eight states bordering the lakes had agreed to pay their share provided that Congress passed this "interest waiver" bill. The new Soo Lock is not the only such navigation lock project underway in the United States. Construction is well underway on the new Olmsted Lock and Dam project, which will replace Locks and Dams 52 and 53 on the Ohio River, which are located