

Here we are again! The Holiday Season is coming and Your Editor gets to pen something something very personal to the members in addition to writing features, marine news, and other such items. We have been producing "Scanner" now for 33 years, believe it or not, and THIS editor has been at the helm (keyboard?) for 32 of those years. Have we painted ourselves into a box, or what? Printing deadlines seem to be getting deadlier, and inspiration ever harder to come by, but the response of the members makes it all worthwhile. When we call for assistance, you're all right there to supply what we need.

Christmas Card time! For those of us who send photo greetings to our marine historian friends, that may mean major stress, as we try to choose the right photo, and make sure it's one we haven't used before. Will it fit into the cards we have bought? And why can't we find cards that say something meaningful instead of rendering some generic, politically correct, and totally sentiment-devoid "message"? The Mailing List Fairy didn't do his thing, and our list is out-of-date, and we don't have enough stamps of the right denominations to mail all the cards anyway.

But our personal stress reliever is to pass along the greetings of the season to our members via these pages. In fact, this becomes one of your Editor's very most favourite times of the year, because we get to speak to all members right from the heart. In no other "Scanner" issue can we spare the space for such sentiments, but because we consider all of the many members of the Toronto Marine Historical Society to be one big, happy family of friends, we make absolutely certain that we have space available in the December issue. And a fringe benefit is that we get to write a shorter feature for this issue to accommodate the holiday greeting...!

The autumn weather, at least in the Toronto area, has been wonderful. It has been warm and dry, with Ye Ed.'s garden still blooming on November 20th. But as we write this, Buffalo is buried in snow and many Ontario towns have major winter weather. Frost will get the dahlias tonight for sure!

What happened around the Great Lakes this year? The number one "feel good" event was the visit of the Liberty Ship JOHN W. BROWN to fresh water for the renewal of hull rivets at the shipyard at Toledo. She showed herself off all over the lower lakes and won a legion of new friends and supporters in the process. We were fortunate to have her here in Toronto not only for public visits and an excursion with fans aboard, but also for an extended period when filming was being done aboard.

In contrast, the year saw two very sad incidents of vandalism created by parties unknown who must have been feeling very bad about something. The R.C.Y.C. ferry HIAWATHA (built 1895) was sunk and her fleetmate KWASIND badly damaged in one expression of anger, whilst in another, most of the window glass and many of the lighting fixtures aboard NORGOMA were broken while she lay at her berth at the Canadian Soo.

Two major accidents occurred on the lakes during the 2000 navigation season, with AMERICAN MARINER settling after hitting a Huron Cut buoy base on April 28th, and ALGOWOOD sinking after her hull buckled as she was loading stone at Bruce Mines on June 2nd. A much more strange incident occurred in the early morning hours of September 25th, when the Canadian Coast Guard buoy tender GRIFFON, anchored near Pelee Passage Light on Lake Erie, was run down and severely damaged by the C.S.L. self-unloader ATLANTIC HURON. That incident has yet to be explained to anyone's satisfaction.

Low lake water levels again were a major problem during 2000. People in Ontario's "cottage country" found their boats stuck onshore and their docks far from the water, while others damaged hulls and engines on rocks that in other years lay well below the surface. Freighters had to run at lighter drafts and this drove cargo revenues downward.