

The fast catamaran ferry SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1, known now as "The Cat", began her revived service on the Rochester - Toronto route on June 30th. A minor accident in which the ferry slipped off the blocks while being drydocked at Port Weller did not delay her entry into service, but computer problems did. The ferry has since been running successfully and to ever-increasing passenger loads, and it looks as if the new operation will succeed. A small problem occurred on August 21st when, in high winds, the ferry struck the passenger ramp at Toronto, knocking out three windows. They were quickly boarded up and permanent repairs were done when the ferry returned to Rochester.

We do not as yet have a return to service date of the former KINSMAN INDEPENDENT, and the McKeil interests continue to work on her repowering. Meanwhile, the 1952-built former steamer has been renamed (d) VOYAGEUR INDEPENDENT and, as C.827118, she is registered to Voyageur Marine Transport Limited, of Ridgeville, Ontario. It is said that when she enters the grain trade this autumn, she will be managed by Lower Lakes Towing Ltd., Port Dover.

Speaking of Lower Lakes and its affiliates, the refit of MAUMEE at Sturgeon Bay was accomplished faster than expected, and she departed the shipyard on May 16th. She has been running steadily ever since. Another Lower Lakes vessel making the news recently was MISSISSAGI which, on August 9, while bound for Toronto with a cargo of salt, lost her steering and ran into the wall above the old guard gate at Thorold South in the Welland Canal. She sliced a gash in her port bow and then was towed to a dock at Thorold where the cargo was unloaded and repairs were made. Immediately after the accident, the Seafarers' International Union set up a loud yowl regarding alleged safety problems with Lower Lakes vessels.

With the takeover of the International Steel Group by the Mittal Steel Company on April 15, there have been changes to the operation of the 1,000-footers STEWART J. CORT and BURNS HARBOR, which for years supplied most of the taconite to the former Bethlehem Steel plant at Burns Harbor. The CORT remains under the ownership of GE, but with its foreign ownership Mittal could not operate her. Accordingly, her operation has been turned over to the Interlake Steamship Company, the change coming in mid-June, and soon was given Interlake stacks. BURNS HARBOR, owned by GATX, has been turned over to the American Steamship Company to run and is now wearing American Steamship stack colours. Both vessels will be time-chartered by Mittal and will remain dedicated to the Burns Harbor service.

McKeil Marine now has competition for towing duties in the Hamilton - Toronto - Oshawa area. Le Groupe Ocean Inc., of Quebec City, has formed a new division known as Ocean Ontario Towing, and it has transferred to western Lake Ontario the tugs JERRY G., OMNI-RICHELIEU and ESCORTE. These tugs already have taken over the docking of most salties at the Redpath Sugar plant in Toronto. The new operation is based at Hamilton.

An unusual visitor to Windsor for a good part of the summer was the former Bob-Lo excursion steamer STE. CLAIRE of 1910. She is owned by the Ste. Claire Foundation, of Cleveland, which has been attempting raise money to complete the steamer's restoration. On August 24, she was towed from Windsor to a wharf at Belanger Park, River Rouge, where she will be open for public tours and her annual "Nautical Nightmare" Hallowe'en haunted "house" event. However, on making the dock at Belanger Park, the ship struck the wharf and took out a 25-foot section of railing. There was no damage to the ship.

The long-rumoured preservation of the former New York State canal barge DAY PECKINPAUGH, (a) INTERWATERWAYS LINE INCORPORATED 101 (32), (b) I.L.I. 101 (36), (c) RICHARD J. BARNES (58), which was built in 1921 and last operated in 1994, will indeed take place. The vessel has been acquired by the New York State Museum and she will be turned into a floating exhibit and classroom. She was towed earlier in the summer from Erie to Lockport, New York, and in September she will be taken to Peebles Island State Park, north of Albany, for a complete refurbishment. The museum has stated that it purchased the PECKINPAUGH for \$10,000.

The 1905-built sandsucker JOHN R. EMERY, owned by Osborne Materials Company, of Grand River, Ohio, reportedly has been sold to Panamanian owners and will be taken to salt water via the Erie Canal and the Hudson River. To enable her to pass under canal bridges, much of her above-deck gear, including her pilothouse and masts, have been removed and stored in her hold. They will be reinstalled when she reaches Troy, New York. The EMERY has not operated for several years, and has gone out of documentation, but reportedly is in excellent condition.