

The former Canadian Coast Guard vessel VERENDRYE, which has been lying at Toronto for many years, mostly on the north side of Pier 35, was towed out of Toronto on November 24 by the tug M. R. KANE, bound for the drydock in Ramey's Bend at Humberstone (Port Colborne). She is no longer officially registered, her last registration as ODYSSEY VI (C.310144) having been closed on September 13, 1988. We have no idea who owns her now or what is to become of her.

Another former Coast Guard ship is currently up for sale by the Crown Assets Disposal Corp. She is C.C.G.S. SIMCOE, long a familiar sight on the lakes and upper St. Lawrence. Retired and stripped of C.G. equipment, her name now is 07001.

Another disposal by the McKeil organization late in 2007 was the small tug BEAVER D. which was built in 1955. Her purchaser is Victor Herbert Powell, of Dunnville, Ontario, who earlier in the year acquired LAC ERIE, also from McKeil.

We now have more information on the departure from Port Dalhousie operation of the excursion vessel DALHOUSIE PRINCESS. She left "The Port" on October 17 and arrived at Rockport, Ontario. Her new owner is Capital Cruises Inc., of Rockport, of which the principal is Mr. Ron Huck, and much work is being done to refit her for excursion service at Ottawa as (e) EMPRESS OF OTTAWA. She will be moved to Ottawa after the Seaway opens in the spring. (To the above we add the missing detail that she arrived at Rockport on October 18.)

An unusual late-season visitor to Toronto was the 1987-built Egyptian salty EBN AL WALEED, with a cargo of steel unloaded at Pier 51. It has been many years since an Egyptian ship has been in the lakes. Her upbound transit was delayed by rudder and radar problems, noted by a pilot, which had to be rectified before the ship was allowed to proceed up from Montreal. After unloading, EBN AL WALEED cleared Toronto on Christmas Day.

The St. Lawrence canals closed for the season on December 28, when the last downbound freighter, BIRCHGLEN, passed downbound from Hamilton for Baltimore. The final downbound lockage was of the Coast Guard icebreakers MARTHA L. BLACK and TRACY, along with the tugs OCEAN GOLF (better known years ago as HELEN M. McALLISTER) and LA PRAIRIE. The last salt-water ship out of the system was FEDERAL WESER on December 27. The last upbound transit was made on December 27 by PINEGLEN.

At the time of this writing, we had no information on the closing of the Welland Canal, which had been scheduled for December 30. The Soo Locks will close as usual on January 15.

In our December issue, we did not have space to note the return to the lakes of the Purvis Marine craneship YANKCANUCK, which spent the 2007 season on the east coast and the gulf. She was back upbound in the Welland Canal on November 12 but did not go into winter quarters immediately. Steel cargoes out of the Soo were found for her and she was still operating as December drew to a close.

Still holding down the stone trade between Colborne and Clarkson as we go to press is the oldest whole vessel in the Upper Lakes Shipping fleet, the 1952-built self-unloader JAMES NORRIS. (We say "whole", because the forward section of CANADIAN TRANSFER is nine years older.) The NORRIS outlived her sistership GORDON C. LEITCH (i), because the latter never got a self-unloader conversion. But in recent years, there have been rumours that the NORRIS was nearing the end of her career, at least as a self-powered ship. But now comes word that she will soon receive a \$14 million refit to extend her life. The work will include a repowering to replace her Unaflow steam engine.

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THE SHIPS OF UPPER LAKES SHIPPING

As part of the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Upper Lakes Group Inc., member Skip Gillham has produced a new book detailing the company's history through the history of its many vessels. A 186-page softcover, it features colour cover photos and endpieces, and b&w photos inside.

The book is available for \$30.00 directly from Skip. Address him at 3750 King Street, Vine-land, Ontario LOR 2C0. For U.S. orders, remittance should be made in U.S. funds.

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