

Observers around the Toronto waterfront recently were treated to a rare view of the venerable passenger steamer MINNETONKA. What's that, you say? There is no steamer by that name on the lakes or on Toronto Bay? Well, for a few short days in mid-October, there certainly was! Heartstar Productions was filming scenes for a television movie entitled "Enchantment", which supposedly is based on a true story concerning the latter years of the life of Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), and the film stars Jason Robards and Talia Shire. Some of the scenes were intended to represent events aboard the liner MINNETONKA at sea, as well as at dock at London and New York, all in 1907. Some of the shooting was done aboard JADRAN (Captain John's Harbour Boat Restaurant), but most of the marine scenes were filmed aboard the eighty-year-old sidewheel ferry TRILLIUM. The latter, the largest of the Toronto Island ferries, had sets erected on her promenade and boat decks, and the boat deck even featured a shuffleboard court painted on the decking and imitation walls, complete with portholes, placed around TRILLIUM's bow pilothouse. A large wooden stairway (stars should not have to climb ladders) was built from the prom deck aft to the boat deck, hidden from view by the aft pilothouse. The filming aboard TRILLIUM was done on October 15 and 16, with the ship running for part of the time, but by the evening of October 17, all of the sets had been removed and work was underway on the laying-up of TRILLIUM for the winter. The movie will be screened in 1991 via the Disney organization. As for TRILLIUM, we wonder whether T.M.H.S. member Capt. Charles Colenutt (TRILLIUM's master) will be featuring shuffleboard on the boat deck when TRILLIUM does her harbour cruises during the summer of 1991...

Shortly after midnight in the early morning of Sunday, September 9th, the Toronto Island ferry THOMAS RENNIE set out from Toronto for Whitby, where she arrived some five hours later and went on the drydock there. (Yes, the drydock still is operating, despite municipal efforts to make Whitby into a harbour for recreational purposes only.) The RENNIE was there for survey and inspection but, in addition, some new bulkheads were installed in the hull to conform with current regulations. The 39-year-old RENNIE arrived back in Toronto on October 9th, exactly one month after her departure. Shortly thereafter, Metro Parks & Property Department ferry crews began ripping out the old wood-framed windows in the RENNIE's main cabin so that Herb Fraser & Associates Ltd. could attend to the installation of new windows similar to those that were installed in her older, near-sister SAM McBRIDE in the autumn of 1989. That process involves the welding of long steel plates over the old window openings, and then cutting new openings sized to accommodate the new metal window frames.

At about 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16th, while she was docked at Indiana Harbor on Lake Michigan, and loading a cargo of millscale for delivery to Michipicoten Harbour on Lake Superior, the Algoma Central Marine self-unloader JOHN B. AIRD suffered a serious fire in the area of her cargo-elevating belts. Local firefighters attended and got the flames under control, but as is typical in such incidents, it took quite a while to extinguish the blaze completely. In fact, it was not until about 10:00 p.m. that the fire was considered to be out. At the time of this writing, we had no confirmation of the cause of the fire, but it was known that Sandrin Brothers Limited and Herb Fraser & Associates Ltd. had been awarded contracts for various aspects of the repair job. The AIRD arrived at Sarnia on October 21st and the repair work was to begin the following day and was anticipated to keep the ship tied up for at least four weeks. JOHN B. AIRD, 22881 Gross Tons, was built in 1983 by Collingwood Shipyards Ltd.

On August 1st, workers at the Algoma Steel plant at the Canadian Soo went out on strike. Supervisory staff kept certain parts of the plant operating, but when no settlement had been reached by mid-October, the plant was closed and winterized. Next spring could be very quiet for shipping into the plant unless a settlement is reached.