

are fortunate indeed to have Bill available to tend the Treasury for us.

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### ANOTHER STEAMBOAT FOR THE MUSKOKA LAKES

It was announced in August that the Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society, of Gravenhurst, owner of the restored and successfully operating passenger steamer SEGWUN, has acquired the venerable steam yacht WANDA III.

This vessel, 94 feet long and 12 feet in the beam, was built in 1915 by Polson Iron Works, Toronto, for the Eaton family, and she operated from their summer home, Ravenscrag, on Lake Rosseau in Muskoka. The composite-hulled WANDA III was fitted with a triple expansion steam engine of the type that Polson Iron Works was placing in minesweepers being constructed for the Royal Canadian Navy, and this machinery reportedly gave the yacht a cruising speed of at least 20 miles per hour. WANDA III was one of the largest and fastest steam yachts ever operated on the Muskoka Lakes.

In 1930, the Eatons sold WANDA III to the Bigwin Inn Company, which operated the largest and finest summer hotel on the Lake of Bays. WANDA III was moved overland from the Muskoka Lakes to her new home, and then was used by Bigwin Inn for special cruises for its guests. Fortunately, the interior of the yacht never was altered so she retained her fine Honduras mahogany fittings.

WANDA III did not operate during the war years, and after the decline of Bigwin Inn in the 1950s (the hotel has been lying derelict now for many years), the yacht was sold. She passed through several changes of ownership and then, about 25 years ago, she was acquired by Mr. G. A. "Sandy" Thomson, who restored the vessel and used her for private cruising until a few years ago. WANDA III has been reposing at Mr. Thomson's property at Rat Bay, near Dwight Village, on the Lake of Bays. (Some of our T.M.H.S. members may recall that Sandy Thomson was an early member of our Society and attended many of our early meetings.)

The Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society intended to haul WANDA III back overland to Lake Muskoka and, at the time of this writing, it had been anticipated that a start on this venture might be made on September 15th. The Society's eventual use of WANDA III will depend upon the results of economic studies and fundraising efforts, but immediate plans, of course, include the removal of the boat to Gravenhurst, along with her own marine railway and steam winch, and the arranging of protected dryland storage.

Upon the obtaining of the necessary funding, the Society hopes to restore WANDA III and then use her as a static display alongside SEGWUN's Gravenhurst wharf, available as a shoreside venue for small party functions. Long-term plans are for WANDA III to be returned to full operation under steam, and for her to be available for limited charters and for display at antique boat shows around the Muskoka Lakes.

Regardless of what the future may hold, the Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society is fortunate to have ensured the immediate preservation of this unique vessel, the last local operational survivor of her kind. Considering the successful job that the Society, along with the Muskoka Lakes Navigation and Hotel Company Limited, has done in preserving, restoring and operating the beautiful SEGWUN, it is reasonable to assume that its work with WANDA III will be every bit as successful.

The Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society is a registered charitable organization (No. 04 12973 5213), and anyone wishing to make a donation to "Muskoka Steamship and Historical Society - WANDA III Fund" may address the Society at 820 Bay Street, Gravenhurst, Ontario P1P 1G7. Donations will be acknowledged with an official receipt for income tax purposes.

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