

In the October issue, when we reported the scrapping in late 1992 of TELCHAC, (a) GRIFFON (67), (b) FRANQUELIN (11)(87), (c) EVA DESGAGNES (89), we noted that there remained in the lakes system only one of the Beaconsfield Steamships sistership motorvessels of the mid-1950s, that being STELLA DESGAGNES, (a) TECUMSEH (67), (b) NEW YORK NEWS (III)(86). She was the last of the trio to be built, being Hull 19 out of Port Weller Dry Docks in 1956. Later serving the Mohawk, Q & O and Desgagnes fleets, STELLA DESGAGNES had been laid up at Montreal since September 29, 1992. Now, however, she has been sold for off-lakes service, just like her other sisters before her. Late in the 1993 season, STELLA DESGAGNES was sold to Beam Shipping, of Panama, the sale being finalized on December 14th. Just before Christmas, the ship was renamed (d) BEAM BEGINNER, and on December 30th she departed Montreal en route to New Orleans and Shanghai, but she only made it to Sorel that day. On the 31st, she made it as far as Trois-Rivieres, but she was encountering much trouble in the heavy St. Lawrence River ice, and she and her sisters were always known for their lack of power, especially in ice. As well, she sustained damage to her rudder, and the decision was to lay her up at Trois-Rivieres pending better conditions in the spring.

McKeil Marine Ltd. continues to expand its large fleet of tugs and other assorted equipment. Upbound in the Seaway on December 16th was the tug/supply vessel ARCTIC TUKTU (C.346585), (a) MARY B. VI, which was built in 1972 at New Westminster, British Columbia, 160 feet in length, 719 Gross and 379 Net. She latterly was registered at Edmonton, Alberta, and was owned by Arctic Transportation Ltd., of Calgary. It is said that she will be used in 1994 to tow an asphalt barge, which we presume to be McASPHALT 401, towed the last several seasons by POINT CARROLL of Eastern Canada Towing, Halifax.

The St. Lawrence canals closed at Christmas time without any weather-related problems, as temperatures remained above normal until the onslaught of record-breaking cold just after the holiday. The last upbound ship was HALIFAX, which was at St. Lambert on December 22 and cleared Iroquois Lock on the 24th. The last salty in the system was SOLTA, which cleared St. Lambert on the 25th. The last commercial transit of the Seaway was made by JEAN PARISIEN, which transitted St. Lambert Lock downbound on the 26th. It was quite a year for JEAN PARISIEN in the Seaway, for she also opened the system, making both the first upbound and first downbound trips in the spring. The last upbound ship was to have been TARANTAU, but two canal tie-ups, one caused by TARANTAU herself when she hit the arrestor cable whilst downbound in the Snell Lock on the 23rd, meant that she could not get down to Sept Iles and back with her load of ore for Hamilton before the canals closed. She is laid up at Montreal with her ore cargo, at the dock closest to the Seaway entrance, so it appears likely that she will be the first upbound ship in the spring of 1994.

The Welland Ship Canal officially closed on December 24th, with ALGOMARINE passing downbound and C.C.G.S. GRIFFON moving upbound. By special permission, however, CANADIAN TRANSPORT cleared upbound on the 25th, while SAUNIERE passed down on the 25th and into the early morning hours of the 26th. It is interesting to note that ALGOMARINE and SAUNIERE both laid up along the west approach wall below Lock Two, awaiting space on the Port Weller drydock.

The Soo Locks officially closed their season on January 15th, but the last lock transits were made on the 14th with the downbound passages of JOHN B. AIRD, ALGOWAY and CASON J. CALLAWAY. Ice conditions in the St. Mary's River were severe, and the trio required the assistance of U.S.C.G. MACKINAW and KATMAI BAY. MACKINAW then departed for Cheboygan, while KATMAI BAY returned to the Soo to assist the ferry SUGAR ISLANDER in the ice. First ship of the "new" 1994 season to arrive at the Canadian Soo was the tanker GEMINI, which docked on January 26 with furnace fuel from Sarnia. She was assisted up the river by MACKINAW.