

In the New Member Department, a hearty welcome goes out to Capt. Edward Sweeney, of Kingston, to Capt. Fred Marr, of Sombra, Ontario, and to Jonathan Boonzaier, of Toronto.

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MARINE NEWS

The strike of workers at Port Weller Dry Docks has continued into the autumn, and things do not look good for the future of this, the last active Canadian drydock within the Great Lakes. The yard's management seems to be resigned to closing the yard if things cannot be resolved, and meanwhile Canadian fleets have had no alternative but to look to the costly alternative of U.S. shipyards, few as they now may be, for repair work and for drydocking in the coming winter months. The strike has caused particular grief to the Algoma Central Marine fleet, whose steamer ALGOGULF (II), the former SCOTT MISENER (IV), has been languishing in the drydock, mid-way through a refit. Not only has she been trapped inside the dock, but with hull repairs not completed, she could not be floated in her present state anyway. We sincerely hope that all of Port Weller's problems can be resolved, not only for the future of ALGOGULF or the Port Weller shipyard itself, but for the entire future of Canadian lake shipping.

We earlier reported on the cessation of the Norfolk Southern railway ferry crossing of the Detroit River between Windsor and Detroit, due to the completion of the enlargement of the tunnel beneath the river, and the curtailment of the Canadian National railferry service between Sarnia and Port Huron as the completion of the second St. Clair River tunnel nears. The most recent bad news concerns the CSX Transportation crossing between Port Huron and Sarnia, most recently operated by the barge (and former steamer) PERE MARQUETTE 10 pushed by the tug C & O 452. With the ability of the Windsor - Detroit tunnel to handle oversized cars beginning last April, CSX cut the Port Huron ferry route to one crew shift, five days a week, but the service ended for good when the tug and barge tied up at Port Huron at 10:05 p.m., on Friday, October 7, 1994. What will happen to the tug and barge so far is not known. The Canadian National ferry service on the St. Clair River, although much reduced, will continue until the new tunnel finally opens during 1995.

A major grounding incident occurred on Monday, October 10th, 1994, when the USS Great Lakes Fleet Inc. self-unloader ROGER BLOUGH found the bottom of the Detroit River near Zug Island. A major factor contributing to the accident was a strong northwesterly wind which dropped water levels in western Lake Erie and the Detroit River. Five tugs worked on the BLOUGH until late in the evening on the day of the grounding, and efforts were renewed the following day until the BLOUGH was refloated.

On Saturday, October 15th, 1994, the Diamond Jack's River Tours excursion boat DIAMOND BELLE made an excursion from Detroit to Wallaceburg, Ontario. Marine activity at Wallaceburg has been dormant since the discontinuance of Groupe Desgagnes freight service there, but commercial passenger vessel service to the Sydenham River port has been even more rare. In fact, prior to DIAMOND BELLE's trip, the last excursion boat trip from Detroit to Wallaceburg was made by the much-loved and long-lamented Ashley & Dustin steamer PUT-IN-BAY, which made an afternoon and moonlight run up the Chenal Ecarte in 1951! Prior to that, the last trips had been made by THOUSAND ISLANDER during 1928, although her Detroit - Chatham - Wallaceburg service was cancelled on July 30th of that year due to poor patronage. Our Ship of the Month No. 215 of this issue, the Sarnia - Port Huron ferry steamer HIAWATHA, made her last recorded excursion up as far as Wallaceburg during the summer of 1923, when she was nearing the end of her service on the St. Clair River and environs.