

At one time or another, almost all of us have wished that more old lake vessels could have been preserved for the enlightenment of future generations. One of the best of the existing museum vessels has been the former Cleveland-Cliffs Steamship Company's bulk carrier WILLIAM G. MATHER which, for four years, has been on display on the Cleveland waterfront under the auspices of the Great Lakes Historical Society. Unfortunately, despite the quality of the MATHER display, the future of the 1925-built steamer appears to be unpromising, to say the least. The Society has been unable to secure from the city permanent docking facilities for the MATHER after the expiration of its current four-year lease at the end of 1994, and revenues from visitors to the ship in her present location have not reached expectations. As a result, on August 31st, the board of G.L.H.S. voted unanimously to dispose of the MATHER in any way possible, and appointed an ad hoc board committee to attend to the divestiture. This is one of the saddest developments to occur in the area of lake marine history in many years, and points out the effects of a municipality's failure to appreciate its history. We hope against hope that some way can be found to continue the preservation of the MATHER before she is lost to us forever.

Strange developments have occurred recently in respect of some idle Lake Michigan carferries. Contessa Cruise Lines of Minnesota, a firm reportedly intending to enter the marine casino gaming trade, has acquired the long-idle former Ann Arbor Railroad ferries ARTHUR K. ATKINSON and VIKING, as well as the Lake Michigan Carferry Company's spare boat CITY OF MIDLAND 41, and reportedly also has been negotiating for the purchase of L.M.C.C.'s long-idle and severely cannibalized SPARTAN, former sistership of the operating BADGER. VIKING actually was drydocked by Bay Shipbuilding at Sturgeon Bay during the summer and came off the drydock there on August 10th. On September 2nd, Selvick Marine tugs brought the ATKINSON to Ludington, where the L.M.C.C. reportedly will provide docking facilities for the ferry for her new owners. Considering the fact that both ATKINSON and VIKING were rumoured not so long ago to be destined for scrapping overseas, that SPARTAN could not be operated without a major reconstruction, and that CITY OF MIDLAND 41, although currently out-of-class, was said to be destined to operate in an expanded L.M.C.C. service, and also considering the transience of most gambling ship operations, all of this leaves us wondering exactly what lies in store for these historic vessels.

One of the last existing pre-Seaway canallers has been the oil drilling rig TELESIS, (a) CONISCLIFFE HALL (II)(73), which latterly was owned by Underwater Gas Developers Limited, of Toronto. Recently idle at Port Colborne, she was sold earlier in 1994 to Pembina Exploration Ltd., and she was taken around to Port Maitland. She was used during the summer of 1994 in new drilling operations in Lake Erie. CONISCLIFFE HALL, 259 feet on overall length, was built in 1957 by Davie Shipbuilding at Lauzon, Quebec, for the Hall Corporation of Canada, and apart from the installation of her drilling equipment, she remains virtually unchanged from her original configuration.

In our last issue, we mentioned that the St. Catharines excursion vessel GARDEN CITY was heading east on a three-year charter to ferry workers to the Hibernia oilfield caissons from Newfoundland. We now learn that another local passenger boat, McKeil Marine's MACASSA BAY, has been chartered in a like manner and has moved eastward.

One development that we somehow failed to report earlier occurred back in mid-April, when the C.S.L. International self-unloader ATLANTIC HURON (II), (a) PRAIRIE HARVEST (89), was renamed (c) MELVIN H. BAKER II, following a contest amongst the employees of National Gypsum, for which the vessel operates. The new name for the Bahamas-flagged former laker honours not only a founder of National Gypsum but also an earlier company vessel which still is in existence. ATLANTIC TRADER, (a) ALGOBAY (94), is another ship currently on charter for the gypsum trade.