

In recent years, there has been such proliferation of excursion and party boats on Toronto Bay that it was evident that not all of them could survive in tough economic times. Adding to their financial woes in 1992 has been the weather, which has greatly reduced the number of people wanting to spend time on the water. Not running on the Bay in 1992 are the charter boats VULCAN II (recently sold at auction and, we believe, now heading for Hamilton), BLUE CHIP VII and the "Chinese junk" (she really was built at Kowloon) MI-TOI-TU, and the excursion vessels (formerly operating in scheduled public service) STE. MARIE I, MISS KIM SIMPSON and MISS SHAWN SIMPSON. Sold upon dissolution of the vessel interests of Rudolf Vogelsanger (who also owned STE. MARIE I), ORIOLE and PRIDE OF TORONTO have joined the fleet of Mariposa Cruise Line Ltd., the latter renamed (c) NORTHERN SPIRIT. Mariposa is now the largest excursion boat operator on the Bay, running CAPT. MATTHEW FLINDERS, MARIPOSA BELLE, NORTHERN SPIRIT, ORIOLE, TORONTONIAN and SHOWBOAT ROYAL GRACE.

A newcomer to Toronto in 1992 is CHIPPEWA, operated by Great Lakes Schooner Company (D. Prothero, prop.), under whose ownership she joins the sailing vessel CHALLENGE (another former Vogelsanger boat). The 59-foot, 47-ton CHIPPEWA was built by Russell, Hipwell at Owen Sound in 1955 as (a) MAID OF THE MIST NO. III for the Maid of the Mist Steamboat Company. She was the replacement for the venerable, wooden-hulled beauties MAID OF THE MIST NO. 1 and NO. 2, which were destroyed by fire on April 22, 1955. After a 1972-built boat took the similar (but not exactly the same) name MAID OF THE MIST III, the old NO. III was renamed simply MAID OF THE MIST, and after this name we should add (III) because there had been two very much earlier MAIDS which had no numerals after their names. (Confusing, to say the least...) MAID OF THE MIST was crane-lifted out of the Niagara Gorge when a new ship was dropped in, and as (c) CHIPPEWA, painted bright green with yellow trim and white cabins, she now is trying her hand on the congested waters of Toronto Harbour.

On May 2, the British-registered, 90.5-foot-long hydrofoil SUNRISE II was upbound in the Seaway, en route to Toronto, and her sistership SUNRISE I followed on May 10th. These two diminutive vessels were to have been operated across Lake Ontario this summer by Canadian Lake Express. They were moored across the end of Pier 27, at the foot of Yonge Street, but as of early August, neither one had made so much as one revenue trip across the lake, and SUNRISE II had even been lifted from the water and placed on a shipping cradle atop the wharf at Pier 52, apparently in preparation for removal aboard a freighter. A similar cradle awaits her sistership. There is no sign whatever of the other Lake Ontario passenger services which supposedly were to begin operation during 1992.

The Eastern Canada Towing Limited 1958-built, 97-foot, 247-ton tug POINT VALOUR, (a) FOUNDATION VALOUR (73), was chartered to operators in Stephenville, Newfoundland, for winter service and then, in late May, was sold to Thunder Bay Tug Services Limited, for operation at the Canadian Lakehead. She was renamed (c) VALOUR 1 (although the new name was not in evidence when she entered the lakes) and had a new four-bladed propeller fitted whilst she still was on the coast. On her way up to fresh water, she stopped at Les Mechins, Quebec, to pick up the venerable tug DENISE V. (a) JAMES WHALEN (77), for a tow to the Lakehead. The 1905-built (Bertram's Hull 53, Toronto) WHALEN was long a famous icebreaker at the Lakehead, and then went through a succession of owners, most recently the J. P. Porter Company Ltd. and then Verreault Navigation Inc. The old tug had been rebuilt and repowered in 1961, but for five years had been lying derelict at Les Mechins, her hull and machinery having reached the end of their practical usefulness. The two tugs were upbound in the American section of the Seaway on June 10, 1992, and locked up at the Soo on June 21st. DENISE V. has been acquired by a group which plans a historical preservation of the famous old tug at Thunder Bay, although today she looks very much different than she did during the many years she served there.