

Please Note: Although this year we have reserved the JADRAN's Dubrovnik Room, which is more capacious than the space we were allotted last year, restaurant capacity is limited and we do have a deadline for confirming the number that will attend as well as their dinner choices. Reservations, accompanied by payment and dinner choice, must be received by Tuesday, May 4th. We regret that there can be no refunds after that date, and that tickets will not be sold at the door. Also, those wishing to attend Russ Brown's SEGWUN programme must also attend the dinner, for both will be held in the same room.

Please reserve as soon as possible to ensure that there will be space available for you and your party. Our Annual Dinner Meeting is always a most pleasant event, and we hope that you will plan to join us.

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MARINE NEWS

Despite the fact that, at least in the Toronto area, this winter has been one of the most severe we have had in many years, lake shipping got off to an early start during mid-March. Weather and ice conditions prompted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to agree to open the Soo Locks before April 1st, and the Poe Lock went into full 24-hour operation on Sunday, March 21st. U.S.C.G. MACKINAW and C.C.G.S. SAMUEL RISLEY broke open a path through the lower St. Mary's River, and then on March 19th were passed up through the canal to work in the upper river and Whitefish Bay. As a consequence, the first laker to pass through the St. Mary's Falls Canal for the new season, EDGAR B. SPEER, was able to make the downbound passage of the Poe Lock on the 21st. The first upbound commercial transit of the season was made on the 21st by STEWART J. CORT. Within the next few days, a large number of lakera arrived at the Soo seeking passage, most of them upbound. It was intended this year to cut a wider passage through the ice in the lower St. Mary's River in order to avoid ice congestion in the area below the West Neebish Channel, but at the same time, vessels were to be limited to slower speeds in the ice in order not to break up the ice cover near the shorelines. This was expected to help reduce the flow of ice at any given time, and thus protect the shorelines and fish habitat.

The first lake bulk carrier fleet to begin regular service for the new season was the Inland Steel Company, whose straight-deck steamer EDWARD L. RYERSON departed her winter lay-up berth at Indiana Harbor on March 16th, bound for Escanaba to load Empire pellets. The same fleet's self-unloaders JOSEPH L. BLOCK and WILFRED SYKES, both of which wintered at the shipyard at Sturgeon Bay, soon followed, the BLOCK sailing on March 18th and the SYKES on the 23rd.

Another fleet which began its 1993 operations early was that of Inland Lakes Transportation Inc., which for many years (going back to when it was the Huron Cement fleet) has been known for starting its cement carriers out very early in the season. The I.L.T. fleet put two steamers into service on March 18th, the S. T. CRAPO sailing from Detroit and the ALPENA from Cleveland on that date. Both were bound for Alpena, Michigan, to load cement. The motorship PAUL H. TOWNSEND was scheduled to sail from Milwaukee on April 1st, while the steamer J. A. W. IGLEHART will not come out until about May 13th, after completion of an extensive refurbishing which has been ongoing at Fraser Shipyards in Superior, Wisconsin, since last autumn. It is interesting to note that the CRAPO, traditionally an "early sailer", played that role again in 1993, which will be her last year of operation as a steamship. She is due at Bay Shipbuilding, Sturgeon Bay, on June 1st for conversion to diesel power. It is not yet clear whether another I.L.T. vessel will be placed into operation when the CRAPO goes to the shipyard for her repowering.