

In our May issue, we commented upon the then-soon-to-commence cross-lake passenger service of Shaker Cruise Lines' LAKE RUNNER, (a) MARINE COURIER, which was brought up from the east coast late in 1996. By the time the May issue was in the hands of our members, LAKE RUNNER had begun her service to Port Dalhousie, the first revenue run having been made on Monday, May 5th. At first, passenger loads aboard LAKE RUNNER were disappointing, but as the season progressed and the area experienced a long spell of hot and dry weather, patronage picked up and the ship has been seen carrying some large loads. At the beginning of August, an additional trip per day to Niagara-on-the-Lake was added, although the press reported some difficulties concerning docking arrangements there. As yet, there has been no further word about possible service to Rochester, which was mentioned back when LAKE RUNNER first arrived on the Toronto scene.

Back on Toronto Bay this summer has been the hydrofoil SUNRISE V, (a) SUNRISE I (96), owned by Jackpot Express Cruises Inc., which last year was based at Sarnia, Ontario. The parent Club Canamac Cruises interests have brought her back to run excursions on the bay, and she thus returns "home". Readers will recall that she and a sister hydrofoil had been intended to operate a service between Toronto and Niagara back at the beginning of the decade, but the service never got underway and this particular boat lay idle at Port Weller from 1991 until 1996.

The only wood-fired, propeller-driven, passenger steamer in Canada, and most likely in all of North America, has moved her operations from the Ottawa River to the Niagara River. A concern known as the Niagara Steamship Company has acquired the little BYTOWN PUMPER, (a) PLANET (29), (b) RACEY (57), (c) PAUL EVANS (80), (d) RACEY (90), and is operating her from Niagara-on-the-Lake as (f) PUMPER. The new service began during July. PUMPER (C.100630) is 55 feet long b.p. (61 feet overall), 25 tons Gross and 12 Net, and was built in 1903 at Buffalo, New York, as a tug/harbour launch.

Port Weller Dry Docks appears to have two major contracts on its books. One is a refurbishing of the warship H.M.C.S. ATHABASCAN, scheduled to begin late in the summer. The second is a \$5.5 million contract to upgrade the cargo holds and self-unloading equipment of the 640-foot, 1968-built, Algoma Central Marine/Seaway Self Unloaders motorship ALGORAIL (II). Work on ALGORAIL is scheduled to begin on December 3rd, and will be completed by April 3rd, 1998. ALGOWAY underwent a similar upgrading at Port Weller last winter.

Another major contract was completed by Port Weller Dry Docks this spring, that being the self-unloader conversion of CANADIAN NAVIGATOR, (a) DEMETER-TON (75), (b) ST. LAWRENCE NAVIGATOR (80), for Upper Lakes Shipping/Seaway Self Unloaders. After recommissioning ceremonies at the shipyard, CANADIAN NAVIGATOR went back into service on April 20th, but not without some anxious moments during the work. A fire caused by a welding torch damaged a portion of the accommodations early in the spring, and a quick change in the refurbishing plans required the raising of the ship's pilothouse by five feet in order to provide visibility over the unloading gear. There were problems after she returned to service as well, for on May 13th, the NAVIGATOR struck and severely damaged the north dock loading shuttle at the Michigan Limestone facility at Calcite, Michigan. There was little damage to the ship. On July 11th, however, CANADIAN NAVIGATOR grounded in the St. Clair River off St. Clair, Michigan. The tugs MENASHA, TUG MALCOLM, KODIAK, PAUL E. NO. 1, JOHN SPENCE and LAC COMO were summoned to the scene, along with the hopper barge AGS 359, and the Algoma Central self-unloader ALGORAIL came to the scene to help lighten CANADIAN NAVIGATOR's cargo. The NAVIGATOR eventually was refloated, apparently without serious damage.

In the May issue, we commented upon the fact that a number of Upper Lakes Shipping straight deckers were still laid up, having not entered service in 1997. As far as we are aware, all of them did eventually fit out, with the exception of SEAWAY QUEEN. The QUEEN, however, was towed over to Port Weller