

### ROBERT J. MacDonald

It is with deep regret that we advise our members of the passing, late on Saturday, August 1st, of Robert J. MacDonald, of Erie, Pennsylvania, after a long and very courageous battle with the scourge of cancer.

Bob MacDonald never had the chance to know his grandfather, Captain Donald Sutherland McDonald, who was master of the steamer SEVONA when she was wrecked on Sand Island in the Apostles of Lake Superior in 1905, and who perished in the stranding, but he learned of his grandfather's life afloat from his grandmother. Bob did extensive research into the history of the SEVONA and visited the wreck site. He wrote most of the preparatory material that went into our Ship of the Month feature on SEVONA at the ninetieth anniversary of the wreck.

After High School, Bob MacDonald took a position with the General Electric plant at Erie, but in the early 1950s, the lure of the lakes called him to the lake freighters, where he worked several seasons. Bob soon learned that work ashore was far more stable, however, and he attended Gannon University at Erie. There he completed his degree, although still working summers on the ships. After graduation from Gannon, Bob worked as manager of the bookstore at Penn State Erie's Behrend Campus, and he also served as adjunct instructor in continuing education in Great Lakes history. We should all be so lucky as to be able to teach others about the interest we hold dearest to us! Bob was that fortunate, and he held those two positions until his retirement.

Bob MacDonald was a tireless researcher into the marine history of his home area, and he amassed a large collection of photographic material on the subject. That collection is now held by the Erie County Historical Society, for which Bob worked extensively in his latter years. Two years ago, the Society published a very impressive book entitled Home Port Erie: Voices of Silent Images, which was co-authored by Bob MacDonald and by Dr. David R. Frew. This book is a stunning photographic record of the Port of Erie, its people and its ships.

Bob was a member of the Toronto Marine Historical Society almost since its formation, carrying membership number 104. In addition to his many contributions to "Scanner" over the years, he addressed meetings of this Society on several occasions. In fact, he gave hundreds of slide shows and lectures to interested historical groups.

We will miss Bob's correspondence, perennially cheerful even in the face of continuing adversity. We will also miss his contributions to "Scanner" and his wise counsel. We are grateful that he finally was able to put together the ultimate history of the enigmatic SEVONA while his health still permitted, and we are even more grateful that he did it for "Scanner".

We extend our most sincere sympathy to his wife, Margie, and family.

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### THE NEW SEASON

"Scanner" will resume its monthly publication schedule in October, after our summer break. Please remember that we are always pleased to receive any items of marine news that members can send us, and suggestions for feature articles also are welcomed.

Please send us your membership renewal as soon as possible so we may keep "Scanner" coming to you. Thank you.

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