

MARINE NEWS

How much does it cost to build a new icebreaker for Great Lakes service? We haven't the foggiest idea, but we do know that \$5.3 million (those are U.S. dollars!) has been added to the 1999 U.S. federal budget "to continue design work on a replacement" for the 54-year-old U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker MACKINAW. The money in this allocation will be used to obtain detailed construction proposals, and a contract for the building of the new icebreaker will be let to the shipyard submitting the winning design. It is hoped that the contract can be let in the year 2000. When will the new breaker be in service? It's anyone's guess, and the venerable and handsome MACKINAW is guaranteed a least a few more years of service in the meantime. Once the new boat is in service, it will be interesting to tote up how much money has been expended in studying the situation, evaluating the cost of upgrading the MACKINAW, doing temporary work on her, and designing and building her replacement. The total dollar value may even exceed the price of the multi-year contract of a major league baseball player!

An old lake friend has met her demise on salt water. "Lekko International" has reported that, on February 26, 1998, the Panamanian flag tug FLORIDA SEAHORSE, (a) NIPIGON (96), owned by A & J Towing, of Lockport, Louisiana, sank in the Gulf of Mexico in position 29.00 N. - 90.34 W. No details were given concerning the cause of the sinking. NIPIGON was built in 1938 at Sorel, Quebec, for the Abitibi Paper Company Ltd. The 90 foot tug, 201 Gross Tons, was one of a fleet of handsome white-hulled sister tugs used by Abitibi to tow log rafts. After her career with Abitibi ended, she was acquired by McNamara Marine, and eventually she was sold for off-lakes use. Only two of NIPIGON's sisters remain in lake service, both owned by Purvis Marine of the Soo, and both also built by Marine Industries at Sorel in 1938. They are W. I. SCOTT PURVIS, (a) ORIENT BAY (75), (b) GUY M. NO. 1 (90), and W. J. IVAN PURVIS, (a) MAGPIE (66), (b) DANA T. BOWEN (75).

On October 26, a long-familiar denizen of the Port Huron, Michigan, waterfront departed the area, as the pusher-tug KODIAK cleared downbound for Detroit. KODIAK (U.S.275111) was owned by the Port Huron & Sarnia Tugboat Company, which acquired her in 1997. She was 90 feet in length and 239 Gross Tons, and was built in 1957 by the Wiley Manufacturing Company at Port Deposit, Maryland. Used as a barge by the Baltimore & Ohio Railway Company under the name (a) 452, she was rebuilt into a three-outboard-engined pusher tug in 1974, when the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway (later Chessie Systems and the CSX Corp.) sent her as (b) C&O 452 to Port Huron to push the railferry barge (and former steamer) PERE MARQUETTE 10 across the St. Clair River. The ferry service ended on October 7, 1994, and she was laid up from then until July, 1997. The tug has been acquired by Compagnie Ligerienne de Transport, of France, which will use her to push coal barges across the River Loire at Nantes. The Dutch heavy lift vessel HAPPY ROVER loaded the KODIAK on her deck at Detroit, and was downbound in the Welland Canal on November 2nd. The trip was interrupted at the Fox wharf at Port Robinson in the canal, when HAPPY ROVER stopped to load refinery parts for delivery to Qatar, in the Persian Gulf. KODIAK was unloaded briefly while the other materials were put on board, and then KODIAK was reloaded for the continuation of her journey to France.

The McKeil Marine Ltd. excursion vessel MACASSA BAY, which operated charters out of Port Dalhousie during the 1998 season, suffered considerable damage on October 17th, when three fires were set aboard the ship as she lay at her Hamilton mooring. At last report, there was no word on whether the person(s) responsible for the arson had been apprehended, nor whether the ship would be repaired for further McKeil service.

The Marinette Marine Corp. continues to be successful in securing government shipbuilding contracts. Marinette has been constructing two different classes of salt-water Coast Guard tenders, and this autumn was awarded a \$32.5 million contract by the U.S. Navy for the design and construction of two 269