

Van Enkevort Tug & Barge, of Escanaba, Michigan. The tug which will push the barge, when she appears on the lakes in the spring of 2000, will be JOYCE L. VAN ENKEVORT, which during 1998 handled the Interlake Steamship Company's barge PATHFINDER. The combined tug/barge, when coupled, will be 845 feet in length, with a beam of 78 feet, and will be of 46,290 tons displacement. The barge will have an aft-mounted, 265-foot unloading boom, and a single, continuous hold/elevator conveyor belt, capable of unloading 6,000 long tons of cargo per hour.

The Soo Locks closed for the season early on Friday, January 15th, when the 1,000-footer EDGAR B. SPEER passed upbound en route to Duluth. It was the first time in many years that the final Soo passage had been upbound instead of downbound. The SPEER was operating under difficulty, as she had bearing problems in her port engine, and even with the assistance of U.S.C.G. KATMAI BAY, she had much difficulty making the bends in the ice-choked lower St. Mary's River. KATMAI BAY continued to assist the SPEER until she made clear water in Whitefish Bay, and the downbound return of the tug to her Soo base was the actual last passage of the year through the Poe Lock.

There has been a change in the management of the Essroc Canada Ltd. cement carrier STEPHEN B. ROMAN, (a) FORT WILLIAM (83). Since she was converted from a package freighter to a cement boat in 1983, she has been operated, first for Lake Ontario Cement Ltd. and latterly for Essroc, by Canada Steamship Lines, her former owner. However, as of January 1st, 1999, the management of the ROMAN was taken over by the Upper Lakes Group Inc., Toronto. It seems unlikely that there will be any outwardly-visible changes in the ROMAN, as she has been painted in Essroc's own colours rather than those of her managers.

In the January issue, we mentioned that the Shaker Cruise Lines' cross-lake ferry LAKE RUNNER had been seized on December 29th in connection with wharfage fees owed to the Toronto Harbour Commission. Then, on January 21st, the Toronto press reported that Shaker had declared bankruptcy. Shaker had operated regularly across Lake Ontario from Toronto to Niagara during the 1997 and 1998 seasons, but traffic rarely was heavy enough to require the use of LAKE RUNNER. Instead, the smaller hydrofoils SUNRISE V and SUNRISE VI were used on most days. The hydrofoils, however, were involved in two summertime accidents that garnered much attention in the press. SUNRISE V had a grounding in the Niagara River, while SUNRISE VI suffered damage, and several passengers were injured, when she hit a large wave on the open lake. The latter incident was all the more unfortunate in that it happened when the Ontario minister of tourism was on board. It will be interesting to see what happens to Shaker's three boats...

The last ship to transit the St. Lawrence canals for the 1998 season, and the last salty of the season were the same ship! The last passage was made by the Belize-registered salty CANADIAN CHALLENGER, downbound with a cargo of beans. She cleared the system on December 27th.

"Skillings Mining Review" reported in its December 19, 1998, issue that the Oglebay Norton Company recently purchased its river-class self-unloader EARL W. OGLEBAY, (a) PAUL THAYER (95), which previously had been under charter. The report mentioned that Oglebay Norton has been negotiating a 15-year sale/lease-back arrangement for the ship with a Cleveland bank.

Having abandoned as impractical its hope of obtaining the retired cruiser U.S.S. DES MOINES for the centrepiece of a planned nautical museum at Ogdensburg, New York, the city's Chamber of Commerce has turned its attention to the 225-foot rescue tug U.S.S. KITTIWAKE, which is at present up for disposal by the U.S. Navy. KITTIWAKE was in commission until fairly recently and is mostly intact.