

LIUS. With the G-tugs WISCONSIN, WYOMING and PENNSYLVANIA assisting, the MARINER was moved on April 29 to an anchorage above Lights 11 and 12, and some 30 backed-up ships then were allowed to clear the St. Clair River system. AMERICAN MARINER finally was allowed to proceed to Ashtabula to unload once the influx of water was controlled, and she then was sent to the Toledo Shipyard for repair. She spent almost a month in the shipyard and did not clear Toledo to return to service until June 1st.

A far more severe accident occurred on June 2nd, when the Algoma Central Marine self-unloader ALGOWOOD suffered severe hull buckling whilst loading a cargo of fines at the Ontario Trap Rock dock at Bruce Mines, in the North Channel area of Lake Huron. She settled to the bottom, with the middle section of the hull in 24 feet of water, but down two more feet at the bow and stern. The accident allegedly was caused by a combination of wear-and-tear on the 1981-built hull, improper loading procedures, and a mini-seche which caused a drop in water levels at the wharf. Refloated on July 8th after lightering and hull bracing, as well as fuel removal, ALGOWOOD was towed by various McKeil tugs and arrived at Port Weller Dry Docks on July 15th. It was determined that some 30 feet of hull structure required complete removal and replacement because of the buckling, and the decision also was made to add an extra ten feet to the hull to give ALGOWOOD current maximum Seaway length capability. ALGOWOOD was still in the shipyard at the end of August, her loss for the summer months creating major cargo rescheduling problems for Algoma Central.

Fortunately, there were no injuries sustained in the AMERICAN MARINER or ALGOWOOD incidents, but such was not the case in an accident which occurred on June 16th. The 40-foot (overall) glass-bottomed excursion vessel TRUE NORTH II, owned by True North Charter Service Limited, of Tobermory, Ontario, was en route from Tobermory to the tourist destination of Flowerpot Island with 20 persons on board, including a group of Grade Seven students from Bruce Township Central Public School in Tiverton, Ontario. There was only one crew member aboard, that being the owner and captain, Hugh Campbell. (It has been reported that there was some irregularity in the fact that such a boat was licensed to operate with only one crew member aboard.) In any event, the water was rough, but TRUE NORTH II had completed most of the 20-minute trip when, at about 10:50 a.m., and only 400 metres from the island shore, the vessel suddenly took on water and sank. All but two persons were rescued by the Coast Guard, assisted by two boaters, and they were airlifted from Flowerpot Island to Tobermory. However, two 12-year-old students were lost in the stormy waters, and the family of one of them has begun litigation over the incident. TRUE NORTH II was built in 1949 at Owen Sound, and previously was the CAPTAIN AHAB. She was built as a fish tug.

Another fatal accident occurred in the St. Mary's River during the early morning hours of July 28th. The American Steamship Company's JOHN J. BOLAND (IV), (a) CHARLES E. WILSON (00), was upbound in the lower river when a 56-year-old crewman, George Harrison, from West Virginia, failed to appear for his regular watch. He last had been seen at about 8:00 p.m. on the 27th. An extensive search was conducted by the U.S. Coast Guard, but turned up only two tennis shoes found floating in the river. A private boater located the man's body in the Middle Neebish Channel during the afternoon of August 3rd. As yet, there has been no determination of how the victim went overboard.

The 1979-built, 99-foot, 5,750 BHP tug INVINCIBLE, acquired from Dixie Fuels Limited, Houston, Texas, arrived at Sarnia on June 20th, in preparation for taking up duties pushing the self-unloading barge MCKEE SONS, (a) MARINE ANGEL (52). The MCKEE SONS currently is on charter to Lower Lakes Towing Ltd. (operator of CUYAHOGA and SAGINAW) from Upper Lakes Barge Lines Inc., of Escanaba, Michigan. By the time of this writing, however, MCKEE SONS and INVINCIBLE had not yet entered service, and observers were anxiously awaiting their debut in Lower Lakes colours.