

Well advanced in the graving dock at Port Weller Dry Docks is Hull 79, the third of the new mainbodies being built for Canada Steamship Lines. It has been confirmed that it will be attached this winter to the stern section of the 1977-built LOUIS R. DESMARAIS. No new name yet has been announced for the rebuilt vessel. As well this winter, Port Weller reportedly will widen the existing hull of the 1969-built TADOUSSAC to new Seaway width, and will convert her to a single-belt unloading system for the cement clinker trade. What is not yet clear is whether the Port Weller contract will be extended to include the construction of a new mainbody for JEAN PARISIEN, the last of the unimproved, 1970s-built, C.S.L. stemwinder self-unloaders.

A visitor to Hamilton late in August was Algoma Central's ALGOSEA (II), (a) CANADIAN AMBASSADOR (86), (b) AMBASSADOR, which was built at Port Weller in 1983, and which was renamed at Halifax during April of 2000 after being shifted to Algoma from the Marbulk deep-sea fleet. The self-unloader had not been seen on the lakes since 1986.

Downbound in the Welland Canal on September 24th was the tug ROGER STAHL (on what we believe was her first canal trip), assisted by CARIBE CHALLENGER, towing the U.S. naval barracks barges APL 65 and APL 66, which recently were completed by Bay Shipbuilding Corp. at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. These big barges are similar to other barracks barges built on the lakes in the 1970s.

On September 18th, the Milwaukee amphibious tour boat MILWAUKEE DUCKS sank 75 yards from shore in 26 feet of water. Nineteen persons were rescued from the craft, which was raised and transported to shore on the afternoon of the following day. MILWAUKEE DUCKS had just begun service during June. The former British amphibious vehicle was built in the 1960s by Alvis Stalwart.

With the coming of the autumn grain-shipping season, Toronto Harbour's lay-up fleet has been greatly depleted. Starting the 2000 navigation season, SEAWAY QUEEN, CANADIAN TRADER, CANADIAN MARINER and CANADIAN VENTURE were idle here. CANADIAN RANGER joined them on April 13, towed over from Hamilton, while QUEBECOIS arrived during May and CANADIAN PROVIDER arrived on August 12th. CANADIAN RANGER went back into service on July 16, CANADIAN VENTURE on September 25, CANADIAN MARINER on September 27, and QUEBECOIS on September 29. Of the three ships remaining here as we write these words, both SEAWAY QUEEN and CANADIAN TRADER appear to have had equipment such as radar scanners, etc., removed from atop their pilothouses, signifying their retirement as active ULS fleet units. Interestingly, SEAWAY QUEEN had much of her after end painted grey during the summer, as she participated in the filming of "Haven", as also did JOHN W. BROWN during her visit here. When repainted in ULS colours, SEAWAY QUEEN acquired a rather attractive variation on the fleet's stack design. The space inside the diamond on ULS ships normally is black, but on the QUEEN the top half is black while the lower half is now red. Other fleet units might look better so painted...

Speaking of idle Seaway Marine Transport consortium vessels, we understand that Algoma Central's bulkers ALGOISLE, ALGORIVER and ALGONORTH also have been being fitted out for the autumn grain trade.

Another laker which recently has been observed sporting altered stack livery is Cleveland Tankers' 1978-built GEMINI, which now carries a narrow red band below the blue smokeband at the top of her diminutive funnel. The change would appear to reflect Cleveland Tankers' current status as part of the Algoma Tankers Ltd. family.

An unusual accident occurred on September 9th in the Welland Canal. The 1984-built salty SPAR GARNET, (a) MARY-ANNE (90), (b) MARY ANNE (93), (c) FEDERAL VIGRA (97), was upbound in Lock 5 when a computer failure caused the lower gates to close prematurely, and the cable arrestor boom to come down onto the ship. Traffic was halted while the mess was corrected, and the vessel escaped without serious damage.