

Despite the fact that we never see anything about it in the Toronto press, work is still progressing on the development of a fast ferry service across Lake Ontario between Toronto and Rochester. The latest development, announced in mid-April, was that the "chosen" ferry operator, Rochester-based Canadian American Transportation Systems LLC, had reached agreement with the former front-runner, Lake Ontario Fast Ferry Corp., to join forces in the pursuit of the project. Canadian American ("CATS") will proceed as the project's sole developer, but Lake Ontario Fast Ferry will hold a minority share of CATS. Officials on both sides of the lake reportedly have approved of the joint arrangement.

In its deliberations on whether to sock Toronto residential taxpayers with a major realty tax increase or a huge one, City Council made some very questionable decisions recently. One of them was to close The Pier marine museum as of June 30. The other was to make money by plastering the Island ferries with advertising. That was tried in 1999 when the SAM McBRIDE, in the year of her 60th anniversary, had her cabin sides covered with advertising for a children's beverage. Public opinion then was not favourable!

In the April issue, we reported on the opening of the St. Lawrence and Welland Canals, but we didn't mention the St. Mary's Falls Canal at the Soo. In fact, the first commercial passage at the Soo on March 25th was the upbound tug-barge combination of GREAT LAKES TRADER and JOYCE L. VAN ENKEVORT. This pair had been running ore out of Escanaba for several weeks before the Soo opening.

The Hamilton bunkers barge PROVIMAR TERMINAL, (a) VARANGNES (71), (b) TOMMY WIBORG (74), (c) UNGAVA TRANSPORT (85), had her after end elevated on site in April by a Heddle Marine drydock for repairs to damage occasioned when she was "kissed" by a salty manoeuvring near her East Hamilton wharf.

Late last autumn, the 1912-built G-tug SUPERIOR struck the breakwater at Ludington, Michigan, whilst attempting to assist an arriving salty, and settled to the bottom. She was refloated and towed to Milwaukee, where she spent the winter. On April 25th, her fleetmate MAINE, from Chicago, took SUPERIOR in tow, bound for the company's own shipyard at Cleveland, where SUPERIOR will receive permanent repairs.

More news from Lake Michigan would indicate that the Pere Marquette Shipping Company, of Ludington, is attempting to sell its tug UNDAUNTED and barge PERE MARQUETTE 41 (the former carferry CITY OF MIDLAND 41). The offering of the vessels apparently has nothing to do with the storm adventure of the pair last autumn, but rather relates to the lack of cargoes available for the barge.

Work is progressing on the assembling at Gravenhurst of the Belleville-built hull sections of the Muskoka Steamship & Historical Society's new Muskoka Lakes passenger vessel WENONAH II. To be 127 feet in length and 28 feet wide of hull, 470 Gross Tons, she will in appearance be reminiscent of the handsome steamer CHEROKEE of 1907. The ship, to be delivered by the end of September, will augment the excursion services currently provided by the Society's 1887 steamer SEGWUN and 1915 steam yacht WANDA III.

The Owen Sound Transportation Company's 1974-built Manitoulin Island ferry CHI-CHEEMAUN will be wearing new colours this year. In place of the old coloured stripes on the bow, the boat now boasts three narrow, tapered, aft-fading dark blue stripes above three similar light blue stripes. The hull remains white. The stack is now painted with two tones of blue.

* * * * *

We thank all those members who recently participated in our **Silent Auction**. Successful bidders have been notified, and a report on the financial outcome of the auction (excellent!) will appear next issue.

* * * * *