

It was announced recently that, after forty years of providing sail training facilities with its sailing vessels PATHFINDER and PLAYFAIR, Toronto Brigantine Inc. is shutting down operations. In announcing its decision, Toronto brigantine cited "ongoing financial difficulties, aging facilities, repeatedly disappointing enrollment, a difficult economic and political environment for fundraising, and concerns about our ability to meet increasing demands by Transport Canada for sail training vessels..." There likely will be no difficulty in finding buyers for the 53-foot PATHFINDER, built in 1963 at Collingwood, or the 54-foot PLAYFAIR, built in 1973 at Kingston.

Over the past several years, work has been ongoing at Toronto on rebuilding the 76-foot tug GLENMONT, built in 1943 at Owen Sound, into a sail excursion boat. The owner is Mac Makarchuk and the work has been being done for his Borealis Cruises. The vessel has now been enrolled at Toronto as a new ship (C.824441) under the name CAROLINA BOREALIS. Makarchuk already operates STELLA BOREALIS and JAGUAR II at Toronto, and AURORA BOREALIS at Windsor.

And speaking of sail excursion vessels, we should note that Toronto's EMPIRE SANDY will celebrate the 60th anniversary of her launch on December 22nd. The former steam tug (better known on Lake Superior as CHRIS M.) started life as a wartime deep-sea Admiralty tug and she was completed in July 1943.

Delivered on November 15th was the combination of the tug OCEAN RELIANCE and barge 550-3. The tug was built by Marinette Marine Corp., while the barge was constructed by Bay Shipbuilding Inc., both for Vessel Management Systems of Tacoma, Washington. The pair were downbound in the Welland Canal on November 20. Marinette and Bay are building a second such combination, COASTAL RELIANCE and 550-4, and we understand that there may be options on further such tug/barge duos.

Another Marinette Marine new-building recently cleared the lakes. The most recently delivered Juniper-class buoy tender OAK made a cruise around the lakes before departing for salt water and she even spent a few days (November 19-20) at Toronto before making her way down the Seaway.

Recently sold was a vessel that many of us have seen frequently, but to which we paid little attention. She is the Seaway Authority's 67.70-ton SWEEP SCOW NO. 4, which was built in 1967 by the Erieau Shipbuilding & Drydock Co. Ltd. She has been acquired by Rankin Construction Inc., of St. Catharines, which apparently will use her in local construction work.

Departing Montreal on November 20 was the passenger and auto ferry DALMIG, bound for Hamilton in tow of the McKeil tugs JERRY NEWBERRY and PROGRESS. The 149-foot ferry was built in 1957 by Marine Industries at Sorel as (a) PIERRE DE SAUREL. The Ontario government acquired her in 1971 and moved her to Kingston but never used her. The Quebec government bought her in 1974 to run across the mouth of the Saguenay River between Tadoussac and Baie Ste. Catherine, and she became (b) DALMIG for Dalmig Marine Inc. in 1987 when she took up service between Dalhousie, New Brunswick, and Miguasha, Quebec. She was acquired by McKeil Work Boats Ltd. in 2001, and arrived at Montreal on April 18, 2002, under tow from Dalhousie. It is not known what McKeil intends to do with the ferry.

Speaking of things having to do with McKeil operations, we understand that Evans McKeil, patriarch of the organization, passed away at Grimsby, Ontario, on October 20th.

An unexpected reactivation this autumn was the ULS straight-decker CANADIAN MARINER, which cleared her lay-up berth at Toronto's Pier 35 on November 8th and headed down the Seaway to fetch a load of ore for Hamilton. She was not expected to operate this fall, but she was needed to help replace CANADIAN PROSPECTOR, which had to go to Port Weller Dry Docks for major repairs after her collision with the salty STELLANOVA.