

The Fast Ferry Soap Opera has continued unabated. With work stoppage threatened by the Australian shipbuilder after Canadian American Transportation Systems missed a \$5 million payment as a result of promised state funds not being paid, it was determined that the problem was that the Rochester-Geneesee Regional Transportation Authority, through which the funds were to be channelled to CATS, was not willing to sign the necessary agreement. Just in time, another organization, the Rochester Urban Renewal Agency was brought in by the City of Rochester to serve as conduit for the funds, and this got things back on track. There still are many problems to be overcome, most particularly in respect of mooring and terminal facilities at Charlotte, but it would seem that ferry construction is proceeding and that the boat will be finished during the summer of 2003. As the ferry service is unlikely to start up before May of 2004, CATS is now looking for work for the ferry so that she can earn some money in the time before the Lake Ontario service commences.

In the November issue, we reported that Rigel Shipping Canada Inc. had sent two of its three tankers to European waters for winter service. Such, however, is not the case. DIAMOND STAR is operating out of Canadian waters, but EMERALD STAR remains in St. Lawrence River service along with JADE STAR.

We have another minor correction to make. In the November report on the voyage of TEAKGLEN to Goderich, we reported that she had departed her lay-up berth at Montreal on September 28th. In fact, she got underway on the 29th.

A documentary aired in the second week of November by the CBC television programme "The 5th Estate", dealing with the descent of Welland Canal Bridge 11 onto WINDOC on August 11, 2001, revealed that the operator of the bridge had taken certain back pain medication and also alcohol before unexpectedly being called back to work on the evening of the mishap. The lawsuit launched by the Paterson firm to recover damages from the Seaway is still pending.

The scrapping of VANDOC (ii) at the Canadian Soo has progressed rapidly. By November 6th, the hull above the tanktop was gone up to the forecastle, the tanktop itself was over half gone, and crews were preparing to lift off the pilothouse. It looks as if little will be left of the vessel by the end of the year.

A former lake tanker has changed hands again on salt water. The 1973-built TRADEWIND SPIRIT, (a) GULF GATINEAU (85), (b) J. C. PHILLIPS, was renamed (d) SIR MICHAEL on June 17 and registered in Nigeria. Her new owner is Seaforce Shipping. The tanker operated under Canadian registry for the Gulf Canada and Socanav fleets.

A strange situation developed late in the summer or early autumn involving the unregistered, 1915-built tug ASHTABULA, (a) ASHTABULA (47), (b) TIFFIN (69), (c) JENNY T. II, which had been idle for a number of years after her work towing the Shell bunkering barge S.M.T.B. NO. 7 ended. She was bought recently by parties who were going to refurbish her at Oscoda, Michigan, and set out from Windsor for Alpena. On the way, the tug grounded, and in trying to get her off, they burned out her gears. She was recovered by Mike Scruton, of Port Dover, who got her to that port and obtained title to the boat. He apparently is hoping to sell her. For the first 32 years of her life, ASHTABULA was owned by the Great Lakes Towing Company.

This autumn has seen the ULS self-unloader CANADIAN ENTERPRISE operating down the Seaway for the first time in many years. She normally runs in the coal trade to the Nanticoke and Lambton power stations, but with coal stockpiles high at both plants, she was sent off in early November with a load of soybeans from Toledo to Baie Comeau. She returned with iron ore from Pointe Noire for Ashtabula and then loaded coal for Sept Isles, returning again with ore upbound. She was expected eventually to return to the Ontario Hydro coal trade.