

Pelee Island ferry, JIIMAAN, was on extended downtime with engine problems. The 106-foot AMHERST ISLANDER was built in 1955 at Kingston. We had received a report that the Ontario government was intending to sell the vessel at auction at Leamington on February 22nd, but we have not yet heard whether the sale actually took place. More information would be welcomed.

Last issue, we reported the fire which swept through the "replica tall ship" LA GRANDE HERMINE ENR. at Jordan Harbour on January 25th. What remains after the fire is most interesting, as the fire burned away almost all of the wood upperworks that had been built on the vessel, and with all of that gone, the former configuration of the hull and even the former pilothouse and cabins aft can be seen. (The fake masts are still standing.) We should, however, say something more comprehensive and correct about the history of this vessel, as much incorrect data has been circulated. The vessel was built in 1914 at Levis, Quebec, as the ferry LE PROGRES, which was operated out of Trois-Rivieres, and in 1930 she was renamed (b) LA VERENDRYE. She became (c) LA MARJOLAINE in 1956, and latterly operated as a small freighter on the St. Lawrence. The wooden superstructure was built atop the vessel in the early 1990s, and she arrived at Jordan Harbour on July 1, 1997.

The Hamilton Port Authority is proposing to bring back some of the past glory of the Beach Strip with a \$13- to \$17-million project that would include a 400-slip marina, restaurants, shops and tourist attractions on both sides of the Burlington Ship Canal. According to a local press report, it also would include significant landscaping and green space, plus restoration of the historic stone lighthouse at the canal as well as the lightkeeper's house. The marina facilities would be located behind a wave breakwall on the lakeward of the Hamilton-side pier of the canal. The project would require co-operation (read that as funding) from federal, provincial, and Burlington and Hamilton municipal authorities. Many years ago, the Beach strip was a summer escape for city residents, many of whom were carried to the beach on steamboats.

When the Welland Canal opens on March 25, the first ship through will be from the Algoma Central fleet. It is unclear at present whether the official first transit will be made by ALGOCAPE (now laid up at Toronto) or by ALGOSOO, wintering at Hamilton.

A Michigan congressman and senator have publicly expressed disappointment that no funding for a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie has been included in the president's budget for Fiscal Year 2004. It is, however, hoped that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has sufficient funds on hand to continue work on the lock project.

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#### ANOTHER LOOK AT BRITAMETTE

In the January issue, we featured the diminutive tanker BRITAMETTE (56), (a) JOHN GEORGE (32), (c) HUSKY 120. She was built by John Harker Ltd. shipyard at Knottingley, West Yorkshire Ltd., and we expressed the opinion that Harker may have built the 130-foot motorship on speculation that some local operator would purchase her. (The British American Oil Company Limited acquired her in 1932 and brought her across the North Atlantic to Canada under her own power.)

We may have found the answer to this question thanks to the investigative work of member Bill Schell. He has discovered that the 1931 Lloyd's Register showed the owner of JOHN GEORGE to be J. Harker Ltd., and he has noted that this firm not only built JOHN GEORGE but also had an extensive history as operators of diminutive tank lighters and coastal tankers on the east coast of England and, in particular, on the Humber Estuary. The firm was still going strong in the early 1960s. So Harker may itself have operated JOHN GEORGE in the short period before she was sold to B-A Oil.

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