

A piece of sad news concerns the wood-fuelled passenger steamer PUMPER which has been running excursions out of Niagara-on-the-Lake for the past seven years. Doug Pettit and Family, operators of the steamer, have announced that PUMPER will not operate in 2004, and have advertised her for sale on "eBay". The Pettits have blamed the cessation of operations on the generally depressed tourism industry, and the failure of the town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, the Canadian Parks Service or Niagara National Historic Sites to assist the operation. The Pettits, who operated PUMPER under the name of the Niagara Steamship Company, were also upset that there was no local recognition of the fact that the 60-foot PUMPER turned 100 years old in 2003. She was built in 1903 at Buffalo as (a) PLANET (29), and later served as (b) RACEY (57), (c) PAUL EVANS (80), and (d) RACEY (90?). The Pettits say they may relocate PUMPER for the 2005 season, or may sell her. Either way, we hope for the best for this most historic vessel.

A surprise to shipping observers came on November 26, when the Milwaukee-based tugs DAVID J. KADINGER and JAKE M. KADINGER towed the 1917-built carferry ARTHUR K. ATKINSON, (a) ANN ARBOR NO. 6 (59) away from her berth at Ludington, Michigan. They took her to the coal dock at DeTour, and much speculation concerns the move. The ATKINSON's last known owner was Scotlund Stivers, of Marinette, Wisconsin, and the recent purchaser of the vessel reportedly is someone who wants to use her as a "private yacht". This seems very strange, because not even an eccentric billionaire would likely select a 384-foot railferry as a yacht.

Last issue, we mentioned the fact that another former Ann Arbor carferry, VIKING 1, (a) ANN ARBOR NO. 7 (64), (v) VIKING (96), had been drydocked at Sturgeon Bay for survey and inspection. She left Bay Shipbuilding on November 14 in tow of Selvick tugs which returned her to Menominee, Michigan. K & K Warehousing apparently still intends to cut her down to a pulp-wood barge.

Also in the last issue, we mentioned what then was the apparently imminent departure of the former Cleveland Tankers' motorvessel SATURN for warmer climes, the ship having been lying at Sorel but latterly flying the flag of Panama. The ship, renamed (b) CENTENARIO TRADER, and reportedly under the ownership of Mar Shipping, of Panama City, departed Sorel under her own power early on November 14. She was bound for Colombia.

A former lake tug has met her demise in the waters of the Caribbean. Built in 1979 by Hike Metal Products Ltd. at Wheatley, Ontario, for Great Lakes Contracting Inc., she was the 92-foot ELMORE M. MISNER. She was sold to McKeil Marine Ltd. in 1994, was renamed (b) OFFSHORE SUPPLIER, and some years later was sold off-lakes. OFFSHORE SUPPLIER and the barge REBECCA VII recently were in regular service between Grand Cayman and Cayman Brac. Late on July 30, the pair departed Salt Rock Dock, Little Cayman, and proceeded to and attached to a mooring buoy off Preston Bay, Little Cayman, for the night. At 2:00 a.m. on July 31, the mooring rope parted from the buoy. The tug started its engines but the current and waves carried her close to the barge and her propeller was fouled by the towline. The disabled tug then drifted aground off Preston Bay and, despite vigorous salvage efforts, sustained severe hull damage through pounding on the bottom. It was reported on October 3 that OFFSHORE SUPPLIER had been abandoned and, later that month, Resolve Marine Group, Fort Lauderdale, was appointed to clear the wreck. It was planned to cut OFFSHORE SUPPLIER into two pieces and dispose of them in deep water. REBECCA VII was unharmed in the incident.

Returning to service on November 10 was the 1,000-footer GEORGE A. STINSON, which had been laid up at Superior since mid-May. The idling of the vessel had been due to U.S. Steel having purchased National Steel, for which the STINSON had been a dedicated carrier. Still in American Steamship colours but without the National Steel 'N', STINSON is now running under charter to Great Lakes Transportation carrying taconite from Duluth to Conneaut.