

An unusual accident occurred on the afternoon of December 4, when the Great Lakes Fleet's 1,000-foot EDGAR B. SPEER managed to lose her starboard rudder in the St. Mary's River in the vicinity of Lime Island. There has been no word as to how the rudder came to be dropped, but it was located the following day and subsequently recovered. The SPEER anchored overnight in the river and then cleared downbound for the Bay Shipbuilding yard at Sturgeon Bay for repairs, arriving there on December 5.

Also in the BayShip yard at the same time as the SPEER was Lower Lakes Towing's CUYAHOGA, which was undergoing repairs to hull plating. The "Maritimer" was damaged a few days earlier when high winds pushed her hard against Dock 20 at Cleveland.

We have commented several times this year regarding unusual cargoes carried by the venerable self-unloader JOSEPH H. FRANTZ during the first year of her five-year charter to Great Lakes Associates from the Oglebay Norton Company. She certainly is proving to be a far more versatile vessel for the "Kinsman" fleet than was her predecessor, the straight-decker KINSMAN INDEPENDENT (iii). On December 15, the FRANTZ arrived at the "Government House" elevator at Port Colborne to load grain for Buffalo, certainly a very unusual run. (That elevator, now owned by Goderich Elevator, used to be very busy but has seen little shipping in recent years.) After the FRANTZ delivered her grain load to Buffalo, she proceeded to Cleveland and went into the ore shuttle on the Cuyahoga River.

After being permitted to fit out for one trip, to carry ore up to Hamilton, the C.S.L. self-unloader JEAN PARISIEN proceeded to Port Weller Dry Docks, where she arrived on December 13 and was laid up along the fitout wall. There she will remain, her "ticket" expired, until a decision is made considering whether to give the vessel a new bow and midbody. The decision will, reportedly, be made when the future of the company's ore run from Quebec to Toledo is determined. As far as we know now, that trade will continue in 2004, but the future beyond that is not known.

Also wintering at the Port Weller shipyard are CANADIAN ENTERPRISE and ALGOLAKE. The latter arrived on December 28th and was assisted into the deep drydock by the tugs VAC and JAMES E. McGRATH. She reportedly is in for her five-year, some steel work, and a new steering nozzle.

Algoma Central's straight-decker ALGOCEN received considerable damage to her port bow when she struck the Cargill elevator dock whilst arriving there on December 15th. Repairs were made, and ALGOCEN eventually loaded and departed downbound, almost a week later. The future of ALGOCEN has been in considerable doubt of late, but the prospect for a strong grain movement in the spring of 2004 may convince her owners to retain the 1968-built motorship. The 2003 grain crop was not totally moved this autumn and there will be lots of grain to move eastward in the spring.

C.S.L.'s BIRCHGLEN and SPRUCEGLEN both will be operating off-lakes this winter, and both were downbound in the Welland Canal on December 23 for Baie Comeau. BIRCHGLEN will unload and then sail light for Brazil, where she will head up the Amazon to load bauxite for Port Alfred, Quebec. She will make two bauxite trips and then head to Montreal for a short lay-up near the end of February. SPRUCEGLEN, after unloading, will carry a load of ore from Sept-Iles to Baltimore, and then she also will make two bauxite runs from Brazil, arriving back in Montreal for about a week's lay-over until the Seaway opens for the spring. Both will be operating on time-charter to FedNav.

We are very sad to report that the 1895-built McKeil Marine Ltd. tug ARGUE MARTIN, (a) ETHEL (38), (b) R.C.CO. TUG NO. 1 (58), (c) R.C.L. TUG NO. 1 (62), was lifted from the water and dismantled on Hamilton's Pier 15 during the autumn. This tug not only enjoyed great longevity, but was a workhorse for the McKeil organization for many years, and it is to be regretted that the company did not see fit to preserve her in some capacity.