

door for all those who have reserved.

Please note that space is limited and this will be a popular programme. We must confirm to the restaurant the number of persons attending AND their dinner choices, so reservations, accompanied by payment, must be received by Tuesday, May 4th. We regret that there can be no refunds after that date. Please plan to attend and reserve early for you and your party. The dinner meeting always is a high point of our season, and an evening enjoyed by all who attend. Won't you please join us? And remember that the dinner price includes taxes and gratuities, so it is a very good value.

Enclosed with this issue you will find details of our next **SILENT AUCTION** together with a bid form. We're sure you will find something to interest you in this auction. Please get your bids in to auctioneer Gordon Turner as soon as possible.

In the **New Member Department**, we extend a most hearty welcome to Ron Walsh, of Kingston; to Brian Johnson, of Kingston; to Capt. Cliff Morrison, of St. Catharines, and to Catherine Middleton, of Toronto. We hope you all enjoy your membership in the Toronto Marine Historical Society.

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MARINE NEWS

As the weather improves, the thoughts of shipping observers turn to the opening of navigation for the new season. The Welland Canal will open to traffic at 0800 on March 23rd, while the St. Lawrence canals will accept traffic at 0800 on March 25. The U.S. locks at the Soo will open on March 25.

As might have been expected considering its financial difficulties, the Oglebay Norton Company announced on February 23 that it and its wholly-owned subsidiaries had filed voluntary petitions under Chapter 11 in Delaware, seeking protection from its creditors. The company indicated that it would continue operations while it attempts to restructure. Oglebay Norton incurred an operating loss of \$31 million in 2003. News of the Chapter 11 filings prompted much speculation as to possible sales of some of its lake vessels.

The sale of two bankrupt U.S. steel companies was announced recently. On January 30, OAO Severstal, together with its U.S. affiliate, Severstal North America Inc., reported that it had completed the acquisition of substantially all of the assets of Rouge Industries Inc. and its main operating subsidiary, the Rouge Steel Company. The sale also includes Rouge's 50% interest in the Double Eagle Steel Coating Company, and its 48% share of Spartan Steel Coating. Then, on February 18, it was announced that International Steel Group Inc. (ISG), of Cleveland, had acquired the Weirton Steel Corp., of Weirton, West Virginia. Both Rouge and Weirton will continue operations.

ISG is now changing the stack colours of the former Bethlehem Steel 1,000-footers STEWART J. CORT and BURNS HARBOR. ISG took control of the bankrupt Bethlehem Steel Corp. on May 1, 2003, and Bethlehem was formally dissolved on December 31. The stacks now are white with the ISG "globe" insignia in light blue. The black smokeband at the top will remain. The new colours have been being applied to the two ships whilst they are in winter lay-up at Milwaukee.

Readers will recall that troubles were created for the American Steamship Company's 1,000-footer GEORGE A. STINSON last year as a result of the acquisition by United States Steel of the National Steel Corporation. The STINSON was dedicated to the National Steel run and she spent most of the 2003 season laid up at Superior. The STINSON was named for a former board chairman of National Steel and, with all former connections for the vessel severed, American Steamship has decided to rename the STINSON. Whilst on the graving dock at the Bay Shipbuilding yard at Sturgeon Bay during the last week of February, the ship was renamed (b) AMERICAN SPIRIT.