

It was announced during March that a venerable lake tug, now retired, will be preserved as a museum. She is the 150-foot JOHN PURVES, which Andrie Inc. has donated to the Door County Marine Museum of Sturgeon Bay. The tug was towed to Sturgeon Bay from Muskegon last November. It is said that the PURVES will be repainted in the colours of the Roen Steamship Company, which owned the PURVES from 1957 until 1974. The PURVES is a "Shipping Board" tug, built in 1919 by the Bethlehem Shipbuilding Corporation at Elizabeth, New Jersey. as (a) BUTTERFIELD. She came to the lakes in 1922 for the Newaygo Tug Line (Consolidated Water, Power & Paper Company) although she was requisitioned during World War II and operated for the U.S. Army as BUTTERFIELD (LT 145). Roen acquired her in 1957, completely rebuilt her and replaced her original steam engine with two used General Motors diesels, and renamed her JOHN PURVES. After Roen sold her in 1974, she passed through several hands until Andrie Inc., of Muskegon, acquired her in 1984. She has not operated for several years.

As yet, there has been no definite news on what is likely to happen to the Oglebay Norton Company or its lake vessels as a result of the company's bankruptcy proceedings. There continues to be much speculation as to what will become of the ships, with the American Steamship Company figuring prominently in articles which have been appearing in the public press. There are many observers who hope that Oglebay Norton will emerge from the reorganization with its fleet intact. Some of the fleet's ships already have entered service for the 2004 season.

The one ship that so far has been able to be sprung from the Oglebay Norton "troubles" is the former Erie Sand "Maritime class" self-unloader RICHARD REISS, which recently was acquired by Grand River Navigation, the U.S. affiliate of Lower Lakes Towing. After not having operated since December of 2001, the REISS fitted out early this year and sailed from Erie on the morning of March 24th. Her smokestack has been painted in the usual Grand River / Lower Lakes colours, but her hull will remain black for at least the balance of the 2004 season. As well, no new name will be given to the ship this year. The latter comes as something of a surprise to ship fans who had hoped that the 1943-built vessel would have been given one of the GRN/LLT "river" names.

For a number of years now, Great Lakes European Shipping AS, of Ornskoldsvik, Sweden, has been operating the lumber carrier sisterships MARINETTE and MENOMINEE into the Great Lakes, and they have become common sights on our waterways. The 503-foot sisters were built in 1967, and have become quite venerable, as salt water ships go. Now comes word that MARINETTE has been sold for scrapping at Alang, India. There has been no word as yet whether a replacement has been sought, or even whether MENOMINEE will continue to trade into the lakes.

Back in service on the Lake Erie coal shuttle after only a very short winter lay-up, CANADIAN OLYMPIC suffered a fire in her port engine on March 15th. She was bound from Nanticoke to Conneaut at the time. The fire was located in the engine exhaust system, and the ship managed to make her way back to Nanticoke.

A recent sinking at Pier 52 in Toronto involved the McNally Marine tug R.C.L. TUG 11, which had holed herself in ice. She was quickly raised and lifted out of the water for repairs.

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We remind those interested in our current SILENT AUCTION that bids, by letter or e-mail, must be received by Gordon Turner no later than April 10th. Please refer to the form sent to you with the March issue.

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