

During the 2004 season, there have been persistent rumours to the effect that Algoma Central's 1968-built straight-decker ALGOCEN (ii) would be retired at the close of the season. The vessel is said to be showing the effects of many years of hard work, and the refurbishing and reactivation of ALGOISLE and ALGONTARIO during the year may mean that ALGOCEN no longer is needed. As we go to press, it is said that she has been sold for non-transportation use, but what that may mean is not as yet known to us.

The first vessel ever built by Heddle Marine of Hamilton is the 51-passenger, 15-vehicle ferry AMHERST HOWE ISLANDER, built for \$1.7 million for the Ontario government for service to Amherst and Howe Islands. The ribbon cutting ceremony was held on November 10. The old ferry, THE FRONTENAC COUNTY FERRY, reportedly will be going to the Ottawa River next year, but will be spending the winter at Kingston.

A number of steelmakers have been in the running to purchase part or all of the assets of Stelco Inc., which has been operating for some time under bankruptcy protection. The Russian steel firm OAO Severstal was courting Stelco, as was a German bank, but a late interest was expressed by the United States Steel Corporation. At last report, it was expected that Stelco's bankruptcy protection would be extended until February 2005.

On November 12, the Duluth Entertainment Convention Center expected to open bids for its 1943-built, former U.S. Army and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tugboat LAKE SUPERIOR, but not a single bid for the historic tug was received. The tug, which last operated in 1965, has been open for tours next to the museum freighter WILLIAM A. IRVIN, but the retired buoy tender U.S.C.G. SUNDEW now is part of the museum complex which deemed it inadvisable to keep three ships open for public tours. Whether or not the tug is sold, she will be removed from the museum area before the 2005 season.

Meanwhile, interest is growing in keeping the icebreaker U.S.C.G. MACKINAW in Cheboygan, Michigan, her longtime home port, after her 2006 retirement. Currently being incorporated is The Icebreaker Mackinaw Maritime Inc., which hopes to raise money to permanently moor the MACKINAW in a local recreation area and operate her as a museum and bed-and-breakfast. Other ports, however, also have expressed interest in keeping the MACKINAW after her decommissioning. One thing seems certain, and that is that the famous MACKINAW is unlikely to find her way to the breakers.

It recently was announced that the wreck of the oak schooner ETTA BELLE had been discovered in Lake Ontario, some eight miles northeast of Sodus Point, New York. The vessel sank, without loss of life, on September 3, 1873, whilst carrying a cargo of coal. The vessel apparently is in good shape, although covered with zebra mussels.

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THE SHIPS OF MIDLAND

This book is a 106-page softcover with 147 photos, co-authored by T.M.H.S. members Vern Sweeting and Skip Gillham. It focuses on the history of the many ships built over the years by the Midland Shipbuilding Company and other associated firms. In addition, reference is made to many other vessels which included "Midland" as part of their names. The photos, many of which are extremely rare, are in black-and-white except for the colour cover photos of T. R. McLAGAN (front) and SILVERDALE (rear).

The book sells for \$22.00 Canadian (\$22.00 U.S.F. to U.S. addresses) and those interested should address Skip Gillham at P.O. Box 443, Vineland, Ontario L0R 2C0. Remittances should be payable to Skip Gillham.

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LAY-UP LISTINGS to us by January 20th, please and thanks. See page 3. And there will be NO JANUARY ISSUE this year.

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