

The various canals of the system closed on schedule. The last transits of the Welland Canal took place on December 30, CSL LAURENTIEN upbound and CSL NIAGARA downbound. The last salt-water ship to pass through the canal was DIAMOND STAR on December 26. The St. Lawrence canals also closed on the 30th, the last commercial transits being PINEGLEN upbound, and the tug WILLIAM J. MOORE with the barge McCLEARY'S SPIRIT downbound. The last saltie out of the Seaway was STOLT ASPIRATION, downbound on the 29th.

January 15, closing day at the Soo, saw unusually high vessel traffic. The last upbounder was MISSISSAGI, while STEWART J. CORT, followed by EDWIN H. GOTT were the last downbounders, the latter not clearing the canal until early the following day. Following lock closure, there have been tanker trips to the Canadian Soo, and one most unusual trip to the Michigan Soo. The latter was made by the 1,013-footer PAUL R. TREGURTHA, which arrived at the Carbide Dock to unload a cargo of coal which was to be trucked to the Algoma Steel plant. The January 28th arrival and manoeuvring of the ship disturbed ice in the Sugar Island area, affecting ferry service.

We have some overseas arrival dates for lake ships sold for scrapping. HALIFAX (the former ALGOFAX), was beached at Alang, India, on October 11, 2004. RALPH TUCKER was beached at Chittagong, Bangladesh, on October 26, while ALGOSOUND was beached at Alang on August 23rd. CANADIAN VENTURE and CANADIAN TRADER arrived at Alang on January 7th.

Another vessel sold for scrapping is C.S.L.'s 1965-built FERBEC, retired at the end of the 2004 season when she was laid up at Montreal. In mid-January, she was renamed (c) MICHALAKIS, and on her stern appeared the registry port of Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia. She is expected to sail soon, presumably for far eastern scrappers. Meanwhile, CATALYST (the former ALGOCATALYST), has been lingering at Sorel, although we understand that she is to sail during the winter for Turkey. Her Canadian registry was closed on October 22.

On January 7, at Halifax, ALGOSAR was renamed (c) GENESIS EXPLORER, registered at Moroni, the capital of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, a chain of islands between Madagascar and Mozambique. Manned by an African crew, she sailed from Halifax on January 13, bound for Quebec City where she loaded for her overseas delivery voyage.

The second of the new Staten Island ferries, SEN. JOHN J. MARCHI, departed Marinette, Wisconsin, on December 7 and made it safely out of the lakes. The third and final ferry in the series was launched at Marinette on December 18 but she was not christened THE SEPTEMBER 11 as planned, as Staten Islanders did not favour that name. Instead, the boat was christened SPIRIT OF AMERICA which was the winner in a survey in which Islanders chose amongst five names.

There have been a number of changes recently in the Algoma Central fleet. As rumoured, the 1968-built ALGOCEN (ii) was retired at the end of the season and was sold to Innovative Technologies, of Raritan, New Jersey. She is wintering at Montreal and will be moved to the coast in the spring. Meanwhile, Algoma acquired from Marbulk Shipping Inc. (in which Algoma has a 50 percent interest) the remaining 50% of the salt-water self-unloader BAHAMA SPIRIT, which was built in Japan in 1995 and converted to a self-unloader in 2000. It is reported that the vessel's operations will not change.

On January 17, Algoma announced that it had entered into an agreement to acquire AGGERSBORG, a 1998-built double-hulled tanker from Borg Tankers II Limited, Bermuda, the ship having been operated by Danneborg Rederi AS of Copenhagen, Denmark. Built in Mobile, Alabama, she is 472.4 x 74.4 x 27.5. The sale will be completed in March or April, and the cost will be \$42 million. The tanker will be operated by Algoma on the east coast. Meanwhile, Algoma confirmed that Cleveland Tankers' GEMINI will be brought under the Canadian flag and transferred to Algoma Tankers Limited during the first quarter of 2005. This change has been rumoured for quite some time. As well, the single-hulled ALGONOVA has been transferred to the east coast, where she currently is operating.