

might be interested in acquiring the vessel for the shallow-draft Saginaw River aggregates trade.

In a surprisingly early announcement, Canada Steamship Lines let it be known on March 5th that the self-unloader JEAN PARISIEN, now undergoing a mid-life fore and midbody replacement at Port Weller Dry Docks, will be renamed (b) CSL ASSINIBOINE before she re-enters service this summer. The name honours the Canadian prairie provinces and was suggested by the retiring manager of the company's Winnipeg office.

The Rochester Ferry Company is gearing up for a return to Lake Ontario service of the fast ferry SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1 in late May. As anticipated, the city-owned corporation will not try to run the ferry itself, and has contracted with Bay Ferries Ltd., Saint John, New Brunswick, to operate the ship for an annual \$1.3 million management fee. Bay Ferries runs several Canadian east coast ferries, including The Cat (from Maine to Nova Scotia) and has been operating since 1941. Meanwhile, debate continues over who will pay for the ferry's continuing engine problems which reportedly are the result of manufacturing defect. The manufacturer says that the head gaskets on the SPIRIT's four engines should be replaced, but won't cover the work under warranty, presumably because of the ferry's February sale by auction.

On February 21, 2005, McKeil Work Boats Limited, Hamilton, registered its 2004 acquisition KINSMAN INDEPENDENT, without name change, under Canadian registry with the official number 827118. Meanwhile, in lay-up at Hamilton, the vessel had her stack removed and it was said that she was being repowered, although there has been much rumour but little fact concerning such a move. It has been said that Lower Lakes Towing will operate the 1952-built ship for McKeil in the Canadian trade, from Port Stanley and Hamilton to St. Lawrence River ports. It is thought that the vessel will have to be renamed before she enters Canadian service.

The new United States Coast Guard icebreaker MACKINAW, under construction by the Marinette Marine Corp. at Marinette, Wisconsin, will be side-launched into the Menominee River on Saturday, April 2nd. The launch previously had been set for March 19, but the date had to be postponed due to schedule of the ship's sponsor, Mrs. Jean Hastert, wife of the Speaker of the House, J. Dennis Hastert, Republican - Batavia, Illinois. The old breaker MACKINAW, arguably the most successful icebreaker ever to operate on the lakes, will remain in service until the new vessel is fully running in 2006.

On March 21st, the Upper Lakes Shipping straight-decker CANADIAN PROSPECTOR, while in lay-up at Thunder Bay but being worked on for the new shipping season, suffered an explosion of fumes from a fuel tank. The explosion was blamed on welding operations being carried out aboard the ship. A large fireball was produced but there was little damage and no injuries suffered.

It recently was reported that the drilling ship LOUIS J. GOULET, (a) CONIS-CLIFFE HALL (ii)(75), (b) TELESIS (02), was "adrift" off Conception Island in the Bahamas and was a danger to the local ecosystem. The ship actually was at anchor, but her condition made it appear as if she had been abandoned. Local authorities were attempting to trace her owners. The GOULET, one of the last "canallers" afloat, left the Great Lakes for Walker Cay in the Bahamas in 2002 and then was owned by Bahamas Oil.

The listings of Transport Canada show that not only BARGE LAVIOLETTE and bulk CANADIAN MARINER, but also the tug COMMODORE STRAITS are now owned by Distribution Grands Lacs/St-Laurent Ltée., of Trois-Rivières, Quebec. The same firm now is the Canadian representative of Ceres Consulting LLC, of (East) St. Louis, Illinois, whose four river grain barges, BIG 503, BIG 543, BIG 546 and BIG 549, were brought to the lakes in 2004 and registered in Canada (at Trois-Rivières) on January 6, 2005.