

Last issue, we mentioned that the straight-deck bulk carrier TEAKGLEN, (a) MANTADOC (ii) (02), having been purchased by Wayne Elliott, Port Colborne, had been towed in September from Sarnia to Thunder Bay, where she was to be refurbished at the Pascol shipyard prior to re-entering active lake service. Despite having been sold by C.S.L. to Goderich Elevators for non-transportation purposes only, the ship has, indeed, returned to active service. Renamed (c) MARITIME TRADER, the vessel began loading grain at Thunder Bay on October 1st, and she was downbound in the Welland Canal on October 6. She now has a bright blue hull and forecastle, with a white poop and cabins. The stack is the same blue with a broad white band on which appears a stylized blue letter 'M'. Still owned by Elliott, the 1967-built motorvessel is contracted to Voyageur Marine Transport Ltd., of Ridgeville, Ontario, and she is hauling grain primarily for James Richardson & Sons.

The same management will be operating the VOYAGEUR INDEPENDENT (the former KINSMAN INDEPENDENT [iii]) when she returns to service. It is to be assumed that she also will be given the blue livery that MARITIME TRADER now wears. After seeing so many older lakers sent to the breakers in recent years, it is both amazing and pleasant to see that there is a specialty trade available to keep at least these two ships active.

Yet another old laker has returned to service briefly, although as a barge rather than as a steamship. She is Inland Lakes Management Inc.'s 1927-built cement carrier S. T. CRAPO, which last operated in 1996 and since has been used as a storage and transfer barge at Green Bay, Wisconsin. The same fleet's ALPENA recently lost her rudder, and that forced ALPENA to the Bay Shipbuilding yard at Sturgeon Bay, where the rudder, recovered by the American Diving and Salvage Company, was reinstalled. To handle cargo commitments on a temporary basis, the CRAPO was taken in tow by the G-tugs OHIO and INDIANA and on October 22 she arrived at Alpena to load cement. The tow arrived back at Green Bay on October 29. At that time, it was unclear whether the CRAPO would be making any further trips under tow.

There is news in respect of both "fast ferries" operating on the lakes. LAKE EXPRESS, operating on Lake Michigan between Muskegon and Milwaukee, has cut short its season for the second year in a row. Although having had a successful summer season with increased passenger loads, declining ridership in the autumn prompted management to cut short the service effective October 31 rather than continuing in service until the end of the calendar year.

Meanwhile, on Lake Ontario, the operation of SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1 reportedly lost \$4.2 million on her season through August. The ferry, owned by the Rochester Ferry Company and operated by Bay Ferries Great Lakes LLC, supposedly ran within her expense budget, but suffered in ridership as a result of delays which caused her not to begin her season until the end of June. Although it had been planned to register the ferry in the U.S.A. this season rather than in the Bahamas, that change was not made and hence pilotage fees still were being incurred. Apparently it is hoped that the registry issue will be resolved before next season. Meanwhile, SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1 is now operating on a "fall schedule", which sees her making five round trips per week, one each day except for Tuesday and Thursday.

Another lake ferry has been in the news recently. The Owen Sound Transportation Company Ltd.'s 1974-built ferry CHI-CHEEMAUN, which runs the service between Tobermory and South Baymouth, arrived at Sarnia on October 18 where, over the winter, she will receive the first half of a mid-life refit. This winter, Shelley Marine and Machine Inc., Sarnia, will replace the ferry's generators, bowthruster motor, auxiliary boiler equipment and electrical parts. Over the winter of 2006-2007, the ferry will return to Sarnia to have her two Ruston main diesel engines replaced by four 6-cylinder Caterpillar diesels. This winter's work is scheduled to be completed in time for CHI-CHEEMAUN to begin her 2006 operating season on May 5th.

Last issue, we noted that the U.S. House of Representatives had voted unanimously to approve the Coast Guard Authorization Bill, which includes a provision that, upon retirement in 2006, the 1944-built icebreaker MACKINAW be conveyed to the City Of Cheboygan and Cheboygan County for use as a museum. The second step in the process, approval by the U.S. Senate, recently was given, and so it now seems certain that the venerable but highly-respected icebreaker will, indeed, be preserved. Cheboygan has long been MACKINAW's home base, as it will be for the newly-constructed replacement, also named MACKINAW, and so in future there will be two icebreakers named MACKINAW resident there.