

It was announced on October 6th that Oglebay Norton Marine Services Company LLC had agreed in principle to sell its 1952-built self-unloading steamer BUCKEYE (iii), (a) SPARROWS POINT (90), to K & K Warehousing Inc., of Menominee, Michigan, for conversion to an unmanned barge. K & K also owns the cargo transfer barge and ex-steamer WILLIAM H. DONNER, the former Detroit River carfloat MANITOWOC, and the former Lake Michigan carferry VIKING 1. BUCKEYE had been idle at Toledo for the entire 2005 season. The same press release that announced the sale of BUCKEYE also mentioned that Oglebay Norton had retained the firm of Jeffries & Company Inc. to assist in evaluating other possible transactions for the rest of its lake fleet.

Possibly related to the above item is news that Erie Shipbuilding LLC, which will take over the shipyard at Erie, Pennsylvania, is a joint venture of Van Enkevort Tug & Barge Inc. and K & K Warehousing Inc. Van Enkevort apparently has made a commitment not only to build a new 780-foot bulk cargo barge similar to its GREAT LAKES TRADER, but also to build four 135-foot icebreaker certified tugs, scheduled for completion in 2008. It also suggests that it wants to convert at least four powered lakers into barges over the next five years. Speculation is now running rampant within the marine community as to which vessels these might be, and some observers have been looking toward some of the vessels of the Oglebay Norton fleet. Only time will tell whether this new Erie establishment will redefine shipping on the upper Great Lakes.

On October 4th, the Upper Lakes Shipping self-unloader CANADIAN ENTERPRISE was involved in a serious accident at Conneaut, Ohio. The ENTERPRISE was loading coal for Nanticoke when her unloading boom swung and caused extensive damage to the chute, traversing boom and arm of the Number 1 coal loader. The loader operator, riding in an elevated cab on the loader's boom, was not injured but was given a mighty scare. The Number 2 loader was not damaged. CANADIAN ENTERPRISE was able to sail after the damaged loader was manually moved out of the way.

A new tug recently has appeared in Toronto Harbour. Approximately 35 feet in length, she is BRUTUS I, built in 1992 by Mariner Jack Inc. at Michigan City, Indiana. She recently was acquired from unidentified U.S. owners by the Toronto Port Authority (C.828110), registered Canadian on October 14, and she currently is being used to power the barge which scoops scum out of the bay and the local slips. In this "trade", she replaces the similar-sized Port Authority workboat KENNETH A. (C.192627), which remains atop the Villiers Street wharf and was not put in the water this year. KENNETH A. was built in 1950 by Mathieson's Welding Service at Goderich for the Island Freight Company, and for years she carried freight to the Toronto Islands, along with the similar CHUCKIE JOE, often carrying back and forth the belongings of city residents who summered in cottages on the Islands. Once this trade began to winddown with the demolition of most of the Island residences, KENNETH A. was sold to the Toronto Harbour Commissioners.

Other tug news on Toronto Bay concerns the McKeil 1945-built tug ATOMIC which reportedly will be repowered and converted to twin crew as part of McKeil's effort to combat the take-over of Oshawa-Toronto-Hamilton harbour towing by Groupe Ocean.

We have heard that the new-building Lafarge cement barge will be christened INNOVATION, while the tug (ex NORFOLK) to push her will be renamed SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN. In related news, we understand that the venerable cement-carrying steamer ST. MARYS CHALLENGER will be cut down to a barge by Bay Shipbuilding during the coming winter. This is sad news indeed, as the CHALLENGER will celebrate her centenary in 2006.

Another former cement carrier, DAY PECKINPAUGH, now destined to be preserved as the last of the Erie Canal motorbarges, departed Lockport, New York, on October 11, using her own engines but with tug assists as required, and has been proceeding eastward in stages, bound for shipyard work on her restoration. Another cement carrier which will receive partial savig is LEWIS G. HARRIMAN. The former steamer, now being scrapped at the Canadian Soo, will give up her forward cabins, which will be used as a cottage at DeTour Village, Michigan, by Marc and Jill Vander Meulen. We had earlier hoped that the entire ship could be preserved.

It has been reported that the previously undiscovered wreck of the steamer GEORGE J. WHELAN which sank on Lake Erie on July 29, 1930, with the loss of 15 of her 21 crew, has been located lying on its port side off Barcelona, New York, and apparently in a good state of preservation. The ship was better known as CLAREMONT, one of the first Misener-owned units.