

### RALPH E. MORRIS

It is with regret that we advise the members of the passing, on January 7, 2006, of Ralph Morris, of Goderich, Ontario. Ralph was a longtime member of the Toronto Marine Historical Society and carried Membership Card Number 473. He is survived by a sister, two daughters and three grandchildren. The funeral was held on January 10, with interment at Maitland Cemetery.

Born on June 15, 1936, Ralph went sailing on the lakes at age 16 and eventually rose to the rank of Chief Engineer. He served on many vessels, including the JOHN ERICSSON, and officially retired in 1992, although each year until his passing, he could be found in the engineroom of some freighter or tug. Two of his favourite steamers were H. C. HEIMBECKER and OAKGLEN (i). Steam power has lost one of its true champions.

Our thanks to Glen Gardiner for providing details of Ralph's passing.

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### MARINE NEWS

In the January issue, we reported that the Rochester - Toronto fast ferry SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1 ("The Cat") had made her last crossing of the lake on December 13, her season having been brought to an early close because of declining passenger traffic. Then, on January 10, newly-elected Rochester Mayor Robert Duffy announced his decision to pull the plug on the ferry service which had been championed by the previous Mayor, William A. Johnson, Jr. Duffy was unconvinced that the ferry's financial situation could be turned around in future years and decided to halt the bleeding. Since the announcement, the city has been seeking a purchaser for the ferry (not an easy task in view of her non-U.S. building and registry), and there remain unanswered questions concerning a long-term terminal use agreement with the Toronto Port Authority and the control of parts of the Rochester terminal by the parties who ran the ferry in 2004. It has been said that Bay Ferries, which ran "The Cat" for the Rochester Ferry Co. in 2005, is not interested in purchasing the ferry, nor does it seem likely that anyone else will come forward to keep the boat either on Lake Ontario or anywhere else in North America. Many Rochester taxpayers are lauding the new city mayor for his decision, but we must admit to being disappointed in the ferry's demise.

Meanwhile, there still is optimism that a fast ferry may eventually operate across Lake Erie, perhaps between Erie, Pennsylvania, and Port Dover. Discussion of any details at this early stage would seem to be premature.

Details arrived too late for inclusion in the January issue, but we can now confirm that the last commercial downbound passage through the Welland Canal for the 2005 season occurred on December 29 with the movement of the tug SALVOR and barge KTC 115. The final upbound transit was made on December 30 by Algoma Central's self-unloader PETER R. CRESSWELL.

Meanwhile, the canal at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, closed on January 15 as scheduled, there being no requests to keep the canal open longer despite relatively favourable weather conditions. The last commercial upbound passage was made by EDWIN T. GOTT on January 14, while the last downbounder was MESABI MINER on the 15th. In fact, the MINER was the only freighter to pass through the locks on the 15th. There was no last-minute line-up of traffic.

We previously reported the acquisition by the Toronto Port Authority of a small second-hand tug (or glorified workboat) named BRUTUS 1 to replace the aging KENNETH A. for scooping scum out of the harbour. We now learn that she is the former fishing vessel ANGELA F. (U.S.981529) built in 1992 by Mariner Jack Inc. at Michigan City, Indiana. On the U.S. register she was 40.2 x 13.1 x 6.0, 22 Gross and 18 Net tons.