

breast, and fruit cup. Please send your early remittance to our Chief Purser and, when paying, please specify whether you would prefer fish or chicken as entree. Cheques payable to Toronto Marine Historical Society may be sent to William R. Wilson, 173 Glenrose Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1K7. Tickets will be held at the door for all those who have reserved with payment.

**Please Note** that space is limited and this will be a popular programme. We must confirm to the restaurant the number of persons attending AND their dinner choices, so reservations, accompanied by payment, must be received by Tuesday, May 9th. We regret that there can be no refunds after that date. Please plan to attend and reserve early for you and your party. The dinner meeting always is a high point of our season and an evening enjoyed by all who attend. Won't you please join us? And remember that the dinner price INCLUDES TAXES AND GRATUITIES, so you definitely get good value for the price.

\* \* \* \* \*

### MARINE NEWS

After a much milder than normal winter, shipping is off to an early and relatively easy start on the Great Lakes. The first of the canals to open for 2006 was the Welland, which began its earliest season in history on March 21st. However, the first transit was not made by a traditional laker from one of the big companies. Instead, the first commercial passage was made by the upbound tug SEA EAGLE II and barge ST. MARYS CEMENT II which had wintered at Hamilton. The usual opening ceremonies were held in the Lock Three area.

The next official opening occurred on March 24th in the St. Lawrence canals, when the salt-water vessel BELUGA EMOTION passed upbound through the St. Lambert Lock, bound for Valleyfield, Quebec.

The first major transit of the locks of the St. Mary's Falls Canal at the Soo occurred on March 17th when the icebreakers U.S.C.G. MACKINAW (old) and C.C.G.S. SAMUEL RISLEY passed up the Poe Lock to begin icebreaking efforts on Lake Superior and Whitefish Bay. On the way up, the MACKINAW made a pass around Drummond Island and then broke out the lower St. Mary's River. The Soo Locks opened early on March 25, the first commercial transit being the upbound light ship passage of ARTHUR M. ANDERSON, which had wintered at Sturgeon Bay and was bound for Duluth. The first downbound lock transit was made by EDWIN H. GOTT, also on March 25th.

It should be noted here that this will be the last spring break-out performed by the famous icebreaker MACKINAW, built at Toledo in 1944. After she finishes her duties whacking down the windrows in Whitefish Bay, she will go on a public tour and then, in June, will be replaced by the new MACKINAW, built by Marinette Marine, which will be able to serve the U.S. Coast Guard as more than just an icebreaker.

The first saltwater ship to reach the "port" of Toronto this season was the FEDERAL MANITOU, which arrived in the Polson Street slip late on March 25th. Meanwhile, the cement carrier STEPHEN B. ROMAN has been running intermittently since February, and has also included some runs to Rochester in her schedule. The first salty of the year to bring a cargo of sugar to the Tate & Lyle (Redpath) plant at Toronto was PYTHIAS, which arrived early on March 28th and was docked by the Groupe Ocean tugs JERRY G. and OMNI-RICHELIEU. Over the winter months, the Redpath plant swallowed up storage cargoes brought to Toronto by CANADIAN RANGER, QUEBECOIS, ALGOVILLE and CANADIAN MINER.

The Amherstburg Ferry Company Inc., of Oldcastle, Ontario, recently renamed its ferries CRYSTAL O. and COURTNEY O., which service the community on BobLo Island in the Detroit River. CRYSTAL O. (C.816909), 69.1 x 26.4 x 6.0, 46 Gross Tons, built in 1946, is now THE COLUMBIA V, while COURTNEY O. (C.820253), 86.6 x 32.0 x 6.1, 82 Gross, built in 1997, is now registered as THE STE. CLAIRE V. The new names of the two ferries are intended to recall the passenger steamers COLUMBIA (1902) and STE. CLAIRE (1910) which in years past carried so many people from Detroit to BobLo Island when the latter was the site of one of the most popular amusement parks on the Great Lakes. The two old steamers still are in existence, STE. CLAIRE partially restored and COLUMBIA rotting away toward oblivion, but each faces a future which charitably might be described as "questionable". The steamers stopped running to BobLo in 1991 and the park itself faded out of existence not long afterward.