

The reactivated shipyard at Erie, Pennsylvania, which during the past winter has been converting BUCKEYE to a barge and doing engine work on JOSEPH H. THOMPSON JR., recently announced that it had secured four new construction contracts. The first is for a 780-foot dry bulk barge, which apparently will be similar to GREAT LAKES TRADER, built in 2000 in Mississippi. The identity of the owner of the new barge was not disclosed, but it is thought that it likely will be the Van Enkevort interests. Meanwhile, the Erie yard also stated that it had secured contracts for the construction of three 130-foot icebreaking tugs. Again, the identity of the owners of the new vessels was not disclosed.

Meanwhile, it has not yet been announced what K&K Warehousing will do with its recently-acquired former Oglebay Norton steamer RESERVE in 2006, but it has been suggested that until she can be cut down to a barge next winter, she may well be operated as a self-propelled steamer this year. We hope so!

One of the most embarrassing instances of "oops" occurred recently at Cleveland, Ohio. Work has been progressing on the renewing of the West 3rd Street bridge over the Cuyahoga River, and on March 6th, the new lift span was floated into place. Imagine, however, the surprise of those involved who discovered that the lifting cables were 3½ feet too short, thus preventing the new span from coming level with the approach sections of the bridge. The span was lifted to the raised position so as not to block river traffic, while efforts were made to determine the cause of the problem and rectify it. The new bridge was to be fully operative by mid-June, but it now seems unlikely that it will be ready until autumn. What does seem likely is that lengthy litigation will arise from an error that should never have occurred.

It recently became known that a firm financed by Middle East investors, and related to Navmed Limited, of Folkestone, England, was bidding to acquire the former Rochester - Toronto fast ferry SPIRIT OF ONTARIO 1, in order to place her on a service between Dover and Boulogne, France. The current mayor of Rochester, however, who put an end to the Lake Ontario service of the boat after he took office, said that the city was entertaining a number of potential bids and that Navmed's offer to pay something in excess of U.S. \$30 million was not acceptable. That would have left the city of Rochester with a substantial loss on the ferry's acquisition, and it would appear that the mayor is looking for a better bid.

Since the departure of the steam-powered PUMPER a few years ago (and we would love to know where she is now), the lower Niagara River has not had an excursion boat service available. This year, however, there is a possibility that THE SENATOR may be coming from the Ottawa River to operate out of Niagara-on-the-Lake. THE SENATOR is a vessel somewhat similar to Toronto's excursion boat ORIOLE, which herself is modelled on a Muskoka steamer built in 1886. THE SENATOR actually was built for Niagara River service and served there before being moved to the Ottawa area.

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We present in this issue the second photographic follow-up to our February feature on the Cliffs steamer CHACORNAC. Last issue, we showed a photo of STEEL KING in Gilchrist service and this issue, thanks to Ralph Roberts, we can see STEEL KING being lightered after her 1906 collision with MANCHESTER. We thank all those who have taken such an interest in this vessel.

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We remind all members of two significant T.M.H.S. events. One is the **Silent Auction**, for which bids must be submitted by April 15th. See the bid sheet that was mailed with the March issue. The second is the **Annual Dinner Meeting**, which will be held on May 13. Please see dinner details on the front cover of this issue.

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