

It seems that in our last issue, we had some incorrect information concerning the opening of the St. Lawrence canals for the 2006 navigation season. In fact, the lower canals opened on March 23rd. The first upbound ship, and the first salty of the season was BELUGA EMOTION which passed upbound for Valleyfield on opening day. The first Canadian ship was PINEGLEN, upbound for Indiana Harbor on opening day. The first tanker in the system was DIAMOND STAR, upbound on opening day for Clarkson. The first downbound vessel at Iroquois Lock was RT. HON. PAUL J. MARTIN, bound for Sept-Iles on March 23. Our thanks to Rene Beauchamp for setting the record to rights.

An interesting sale recently recorded on the Canadian vessel registry was that of the barge WINDOC (ii) from Le Groupe Ocean Inc., Quebec, to Upper Lakes Shipping Ltd. and the Algoma Central Corporation. The vessel has not operated since Welland Canal Bridge 11, at Allanburg, was lowered onto her after section on August 11, 2001, with catastrophic effects. The accident put her owner, N. M. Paterson & Sons Ltd., out of the lake shipping business and resulted in lengthy civil litigation and official enquiries. It is unclear at present what the new owners intend to do with WINDOC. They may be intending to operate her, either as a barge or with a "new" stern section, or this may be a move to keep her out of the hands of other possible operators.

It has been reported that the 1959-built MATHILDA DESGAGNES, (a) ESKIMO (80), has been sold by Groupe Desgagnes Inc. for off-lakes use. She wintered at St. Joseph-de-la-Rive, Quebec, and was said to be going to be moved to Quebec City late in April, but we have not yet received confirmation of her move.

On April 21, the former BobLo passenger steamer STE. CLAIRE was towed from Belanger Park, at River Rouge, Michigan, to a berth at Ecorse. The move was an attempt by the Ste. Claire Foundation, which seeks to complete the restoration of the 1910 steamer, to avoid litigation by River Rouge officials who wanted the vessel moved. We sincerely hope that the restoration of STE. CLAIRE can now proceed.

After a protracted tow from Toronto, the 1910-built Toronto sidewheel steam ferry TRILLIUM arrived at the drydock at Ramey's Bend, Humberstone, in tow of the tugs RADIUM YELLOWKNIFE and OURS POLAIRE on April 26th. TRILLIUM is on the dock for her five-year inspection and survey, and any necessary repairs. It was anticipated that she would be on the dock for some two weeks before returning home. Her visit to Ramey's Bend is interesting because that was where she was rebuilt for her return to service more than thirty years ago. It seems like only yesterday that she was rebuilt after lying derelict in Lighthouse Pond for almost twenty years after her retirement by the T.T.C. at the end of the 1956 season.

Although it was rumoured that she would be cut down to a barge over the winter, the month of April saw the fitting out for her 100th season in steam of the cement carrier ST. MARYS CHALLENGER, (a) WILLIAM P. SNYDER (26), (b) ELTON HOYT II (52), (c) ALEX D. CHISHOLM (66), (d) MEDUSA CHALLENGER (99), (e) SOUTHDOWN CHALLENGER (04). The ship is managed for St. Marys Cement Inc. by HMC Ship Management Ltd., Lemont, Illinois, which is an affiliate of the Hannah Marine Corp. The steamer bears a special emblem to celebrate her centenary.

The Interlake Steamship Company's 806-foot straight-deck steamer JOHN SHERWIN (ii) has been idle at Superior, Wisconsin, since the close of the 1981 navigation season. She was built in 1958 and lengthened in 1973, but she never was converted to a self-unloader and thus has had no place in the active Interlake fleet. But Interlake wisely held on to the big ship and now, with business booming and bottoms in short supply, Interlake has decided to see whether the SHERWIN merits the cost of reactivation and possible conversion. On April 11, local tugs towed the SHERWIN from her lay-up berth to Fraser Shipyards, where her hull was closely examined to see what shape it was in. The vessel subsequently was removed from the drydock, and we understand that Interlake is still pondering the ship's future. Seldom has a lake ship laid up for so long been returned to active service, so we wish the SHERWIN the very best for the future.

During the 2005 season, Upper Lakes Shipping's 1963-built straight-deck steamer CANADIAN PROVIDER, (a) MURRAY BAY (iii)(94), lay idle first at Toronto and then at Hamilton, as a result of lack of demand and some bow damage she sustained late in the 2004 season when she rammed the end of the Redpath Sugar dock at Toronto when arriving with a winter storage cargo. But it was decided that she does have a future in the fleet and, early this spring, she was towed to Port Weller for inspection and repair. With the necessary work done, she