

The South American drug trade, being what it is, has kept the U.S. Coast Guard and Navy vigilant for a number of years, and so it was not surprising that WOODLANDS was stopped at sea by the U.S.S. STARK (a former lake visitor and Gulf War survivor) and searched in May of 1992. Nothing illicit was found and the vessel was cleared to proceed.

Her Caribbean, Panama Canal and Pacific coast trading continued in 1993 with the only interruption being a stay at the Tampa Drydock from May 17 to June 11. The ship now travelled down the west coast of South America as far as Arica and Iquique, Chile, north to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and numerous ports in between, with much of the trading to Venezuela and Peru as well as Guayaquil, Ecuador. Houston, Texas, Pensacola, Florida, and Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, were new loading ports. The ship made 12 trips for the year. In 1994, WOODLANDS had longer runs that involved many stops and delays, with some voyages taking close to two months from start to finish. There had only been eight complete trips to the end of the year.

She continued hauling containers and freight in 1995 and then Lloyd's Supplement noted the vessel "laid up with surveys overdue" in July of 1996. We know from other sources that she went to the drydock at Tampa for an extensive period and eventually was placed under arrest, likely for non-payment of dockage charges. The ship was idle until sold to Worldwide Quality Ship Management and registered in Belize as (e) LORENA I. She resumed trading on April 17, 1998, when she cleared Tampa.

LORENA I spent part of 1998 and 1999 working in the Caribbean. She sailed between Port au Prince, Haiti, and Veracruz, Mexico, also between Port au Prince and Maracaibo, Venezuela, and Port au Prince to Kingston, Jamaica. She left the Caribbean in October 1999 for Sydney, Nova Scotia, for inspection and delivery to McKeil Marine Ltd., of Hamilton, which had purchased the vessel with the intent of finding work for her back in Canadian waters, and the ship was reregistered in Canada.

LORENA I was upbound in the Seaway on November 19, 1999, and arrived at Hamilton on November 21. There she underwent some work, particularly the rebuilding of the main engine, prior to a planned return to sailing as (f) NUNAVUT TRADER. Sadly, this never materialized and the ship remained idle at the McKeil yard without the new name being painted on the hull. NUNAVUT TRADER reposed forlornly at Hamilton until a sale to Transport Desgagnes Inc., Quebec, in 2003. The name finally was painted on the bow and the ship departed under tow of the tugs PROGRESS and VIGILANT 1 on June 25, 2003. They passed down the Seaway for Montreal and shortly after arriving there, the ship's name was changed again, this time to (g) NOVA D.

The Desgagnes fleet has long sailed to the Arctic in the summer resupply run and one of their steady vessels on that route for many years was MATHILDA DESGAGNES. Like NOVA D., she also had been built for Canada Steamship Lines and operated on their behalf as the package freighter ESKIMO. NOVA D. loaded a variety of freight for the north at Cote St. Catherine and left for the Arctic on August 24, 2003. This time, however, she was not self-propelled but was in tow of the Purvis Marine Ltd. tug RELIANCE. She made her deliveries and came back for a second trip in September before tying up at Montreal.

The ship was not needed for the Arctic run in 2004 and remained idle. She was reregistered in the Comores Islands in 2005 and departed Montreal under her own power as (h) NOVA on Friday, July 15th. Reports to the effect that she was headed for scrapping were, however, premature, and she did actually see some service. On September 11, 2005, a fire broke out while the ship was loading machinery at Diliskelesi, Turkey. Local officials cut her lines, over the objection of her Captain, and the ship was taken to the port anchorage and beached in position 40.46 N / 29.29 E, with a list to port. The blaze was extinguished and NOVA eventually was permitted to return to the pier.

It does not take much damage to condemn a 44-year-old freighter and it was inevitable that the well travelled hull would be sold for scrapping. After a short tow, NOVA arrived at Aliaga, Turkey, on May 15, 2006, and work on dismantling the beached hull soon was under way.

Eight names, seven owners and five nationalities make up a brief summary of the lifetime of a former lake freighter that tried and tried, but never quite found a real niche in either lake or ocean trading. We think of her, however, whenever we see her sistership, still named ENGLISH RIVER, bringing another load of cement into Toronto Harbour.