

Ed. Note: There, for lack of space, we must leave the story of GRENVILLE for now. Stay tuned, and we will have the conclusion of the story for you in next month's issue. At that time, we also will run a full list of credits to those who have assisted with the article. For now, however, we express sincere thanks to Ron Beaupre for his work on this feature.

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MARINE NEWS

Although the weather around the lakes has been fairly innocuous as the navigation season draws nearer its close, that doesn't mean that severe weather will not occur later. As it now stands, the St. Lawrence canals are scheduled to close for the 2006 season at 23:59 on December 29. Vessels transitting the Welland Canal will have to be clear by 23:59 hours on December 30. The St. Mary's Falls Canal at the Michigan Soo will close at 24:00 on January 15th. We hope that no severe ice conditions will hamper the departure of salt water vessels from the lakes system.

In our last issue, we mentioned that problems had delayed the start of Norlake Transportation's corn-in and wheat-out tug/barge service through the Sydenham River - Chenal Ecarte system to Wallaceburg, Ontario. By late November, however, the service had begun using the pusher tug RADIUM YELLOWKNIFE. The first outbound wheat cargo, bound for Toledo, Ohio, was loaded into the barge BIG 546.

There have been a number of name and pownership changes recently within the McKeil organization. The famous 1945-built (and former McQueen Marine) tug ATOMIC, recently repowered, has been renamed JARRETT M. Many observers will be saddened by this change. McKeil also has changed the name of the barge built in 2004 at Port Weller from TRAVERSE RENE LEVASSEUR to VIATEUR'S SPIRIT. The 1948-built tug PROGRESS has been transferred to McKeil Work Boats Limited from the affiliated Nadro Marine Services Limited, and she has been renamed WYATT M. (It is interesting to note that both ATOMIC and PROGRESS were originally built by Russel Bros. Ltd., of Owen Sound.) As well, Nadro has sold its tug TERRY S. to Andre Wiggers Construction Co. Ltd., of Port Darlington, Ontario.

Meanwhile, it has been said that the McKeil group is involved in the purchase of the lake-visiting 1967-built salty MENOMINEE, (a) HOLMSUND (97), from Great Lakes European Shipping AS., a Swedish firm. She reportedly will be used in the aluminum trade (she previously carried lumber) but as far as we know she has not yet been transferred into Canadian registry.

As mentioned previously, the ocean laker LADY HAMILTON has been transferred back into Canadian registry under the ownership of Voyageur Marine Transport Ltd. She was a little later getting to Thunder Bay to load her first domestic cargo, as she stopped at Hamilton and received her new blue and white livery at Heddle Marine. She was rechristened (c) VOYAGEUR PIONEER in ceremonies held at Hamilton on the afternoon of November 7th. At the conclusion of the ceremonies, she departed for her first transit of the Welland Canal, with Thunder Bay as her destination. She looks even more spectacular in her new colours than when she first sailed for Pioneer Shipping with her orange and yellow hull.

As mentioned briefly in our Season's Greetings section, the axe has fallen on the operations of Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd., which ran ship building and repair services at Port Weller Dry Docks and at Pascol Engineering at Thunder Bay. The company suffered financial difficulties as a result of contracts it took for the construction of salt water ships at Port Weller, and had been attempting since the summer to reorganize under court protection from bankruptcy. Although Port Weller arranged a new and favourable contract with its union workers, the customers for whom the salties were to be built (only one was finished) refused to work with the firm to enable a reorganization. Accordingly, on November 15, Jack Leitch, chairman of Upper Lakes Group, controlling shareholder of Canadian Shipbuilding and Engineering, announced that reorganization efforts had been abandoned, that the last of Port Weller's employees had been laid off, and that the business would be put up for sale. A subsidiary, Canal Marine, of St. Catharines, will be acquired by Protug Marine, an Upper Lakes affiliate, but there is no indication whether any other operator(s) would be willing to take over either the Port Weller or the Thunder Bay shipyard. This will leave Canadian vessel operators in quite a pickle as to where their vessels can be drydocked or receive major repairs. We had previously thought that the lake shipbuilding industry had reached an all-time low point, but we had no idea things would sink this low. For the record, the last job handled by the Pascol yard was the drydocking of the ferry CHI-CHEE-MAUN before she went to Sarnia for this winter's completion of her mid-life refit.