

to William R. Wilson, 173 Glenrose Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M4T 1K7. Tickets will be held at the door for all 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 8. 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. There is no excuse for not attending!

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MARINE NEWS

Despite some problems with ice resulting from the February deep-freeze, the canals around the lakes opened on schedule. What is the fourth Welland Canal opened for the 75th time on March 20th, the earliest opening on record. There also was something else very special about the opening. The honoured "first ship" of the season was CSL TADOUSSAC, which was downbound, having wintered at Port Colborne. The first ship of the season usually is an upbounder, and the last time the canal was opened by a downbound ship was back in 1997, when LOUIS R. DESMARAIS got the honours.

Prior to the opening of the St. Lawrence Canals on March 21, the icebreaker C.C.G.S. MARTHA L. BLACK passed up the river breaking ice. The first commercial transit was made on the 21st by ATLANTIC ERIE, but she didn't get far very quickly. She and other upbounders were delayed not only by heavy ice, especially around Beauharnois, but also by a broken cable on the St. Louis vertical lift bridge, and vessel traffic did not make much headway until the 23rd. The first downbound transits at Iroquois were made on the 23rd by FRONTENAC and MARITIME TRADER, in that order. The first foreign-flag vessel to transit the Seaway inbound was unusual, in that she was C.S.L.'s ATLANTIC SUPERIOR (now wearing a red hull) which passed up on March 28. She is still registered at Nassau and apparently will continue to be so registered for the foreseeable future.

As far as the canal at Sault Ste. Marie is concerned, the U.S.C.G. MACKINAW and BISCAYNE BAY locked through upbound on March 13 so as to be able to attack the ice on Lake Superior, and particularly in the Upper St. Mary's River and Whitefish Bay. The Soo Locks did open as scheduled on March 25, but vessel movement was delayed by heavy fog. The first commercial transit of the canal was made by the downbound ROGER BLOUGH and she was followed by CSL LAURENTIEN and MICHIPICOTEN, although all had to await the mid-morning lifting of the fog before moving downriver. The first upbound ships at the Soo were CANADIAN TRANSPORT and H. LEE WHITE.

If the canals did open successfully, the same cannot be said for navigation on the Genesee River at Charlotte (Rochester), New York. The only regular commercial vessel trading into Charlotte is the Essroc cement carrier STEPHEN B. ROMAN. The ROMAN visited the Genesee on January 11 before going into winter quarters at Toronto, but when she tried to go up the river again on March 22, she found that winter silting of the river had limited the available depth of water to only nine feet in one area near the pierheads. The ROMAN was unable to get in, even though she had only a part cargo aboard, having unloaded some of her cement at Oswego. Since then, there has been much talk about the situation, as the Genesee River was scheduled to have been dredged this year, but the U.S. Corps of Engineers decided not to do the work, allegedly because of budget cuts. It has turned into a political football, it seems. The Corps has responded by saying that if Essroc wants to run the ROMAN to Charlotte, it can pay for the dredging itself - at a cost of some \$750,000 - with no mechanism available for the company to be reimbursed. As yet, no resolution to the boondoggle has been either suggested or achieved, although Essroc might be able to get some shipments to Charlotte using the barge METIS. The lack of dredging in the Genesee River is typical of what is being experienced in many ports on the U.S. side of the lakes. If the situation cannot be resolved, the 2007 navigation season will be the first in almost 200 years that there has been no commercial shipping to Charlotte. The ROMAN's most usual run is from Picton to Toronto, but she normally makes some 40 calls each year at Charlotte.