

In the January issue we reported the details of the final passages of the season through the St. Lawrence Canals. We now can report on the other canal closings. The final salt-water ship of the season through the Welland Canal was FEDERAL KUMANO on December 22. The last complete downbound transit of the canal was made December 27 by CANADIAN NAVIGATOR, bound for Hamilton. The last complete upbound transit was made on December 29 by PINEGLEN, which was bound for Thunder Bay. The canal is completely dewatered this winter from Lock 7 to the head of Lock 1, and winter work includes the construction of small-scale hydro-electric generating plants in the weirs at Locks 1, 2 and 3. The canal is currently scheduled to reopen for the new season on March 20.

The St. Mary's Falls Canal at the Michigan Soo closed, as scheduled, at midnight on January 15. The final commercial passages took place on that day, with EDWIN H. GOTT upbound for lay-up at Duluth, and MICHIPICOTEN downbound for a few more trips before going to winter quarters. The Poe Lock will reopen on March 25, weather conditions permitting.

Several accidents occurred as the 2007 navigation season neared its end. Late on January 8, the Lake Service Shipping Company (Grand River Navigation) self-unloader MANISTEE ran aground just outside the harbour at Muskegon, Michigan, while attempting to deliver a cargo of salt. She freed herself some two hours after the incident, but had to proceed to Milwaukee to discharge some of her cargo before returning to Muskegon with the rest. MANISTEE then went on to winter quarters at the Nicholson yard at Ecorse where repairs will be done over the winter. She arrived there on January 12.

A more serious accident occurred when the American Steamship Company's 1,000-footer WALTER J. McCARTHY JR. was backing into the Hallett No. 8 dock at Superior, Wisconsin, on January 14 for lay-up. The stern of the vessel struck some as-yet-unidentified obstruction and was holed, causing the engineroom to flood. The vessel was refloated aft by pumping out ballast water and, at last report, temporary repairs were being arranged. (No drydock on Lake Superior is capable of handling a vessel of the McCARTHY's size.) Of considerable concern is the water damage caused to the ship's four General Motors diesel engines and other auxiliary equipment. It is feared that the refurbishing of the machinery may keep the 1977-built ship out of service until mid-way through the 2008 season, which could cause American Steamship to have difficulty fulfilling its coal-haulage commitments.

In previous issues, we have mentioned the two tankers which Algoma Tankers has acquired in the course of construction at Eregli Shipyard in Turkey. They are to be delivered in the first quarter of 2008 and will be used in the Canadian service (unlike the other tankers ordered by the company which will be used in the deep-sea consortium of which Algoma is a player). It has been announced that the two 11240 dwt Turkish tankers will be named ALGONOVA (ii) and ALGOCANADA. At present, Algoma has only ALGOSCOTIA operating on the east coast, while ALGOSAR, ALGOEAST and ALGOSEA operate on the Great Lakes.

The conversion of the KK Integrated Shipping LLC steamer RESERVE to a barge is continuing. Most of the work is being done at Menominee, but from December 17 to January 4, RESERVE was on the drydock at Sturgeon Bay for the removal of the remaining portions of the stern aft of the new towing notch. It is reported that the self-unloading barge will be in service in April, renamed (b) JAMES J. KUBER and pushed by the tug VICTORY which KK brought to the lakes in 2006.

The Erie Shipbuilding Company is becoming a busy shipyard these days. It has been building barges for salt-water service, and now has three on hand for spring delivery. The company has contracts for eight such barges and reportedly is negotiating for the construction of a \$50 million, 840-foot integrated tug/barge unit for lake service. The yard is one of the few that can handle 1,000-footers, and this winter has on hand PRESQUE ISLE, MICHIPICOTEN and CASON J. CALLAWAY for work during the lay-up.

A liquid cargo barge of 6310 tons, named HOUSTON, was delivered late in the season by Bay Shipbuilding, Sturgeon Bay, to the Petroleum Transport Corp., a division of Moran Towing, but she had an eventful delivery trip. The non-Moran tug EILEEN M. ROEHRIG was sent into the lakes to collect the barge, but bad weather and early ice delayed the outbound trip. Then, on reaching the Gulf of St. Lawrence and heading for the Strait of Canso, the tow encountered even worse weather and the towline parted. Two Canadian Coast Guard ships, EDWARD CORNWALLIS and TERRY FOX stood by, and three Coast Guardsmen managed to reach the barge by boat but had to be removed by helicopter. Eventually the ROEHRIG was able to retrieve the barge and continue on the long delivery trip to New York.