

The ticket price will be \$38.00 per person (same as last year) and the main course will be either ocean perch or Swiss steak. We'll also enjoy soup, salad and dessert. Please send your early remittance to our Chief Purser and, when paying, specify whether you would prefer fish or steak as entree. Cheques payable to Toronto Marine Historical Society may be sent 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 6. 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? Please remember that the ticket price INCLUDES taxes and gratuities, so you will definitely receive good value for the price.

* * * * *

MARINE NEWS

On February 11, Rand Logistics Inc. announced that its Grand River Navigation Company had exercised its option to purchase the river-class vessels DAVID Z., EARL W. and WOLVERINE from the Wisconsin & Michigan Steamship Company, from which it had been chartering the three ships since August 1, 2006. The purchase price reportedly was some \$20 million. After completion of the sale, Grand River resold WOLVERINE to another affiliated firm, Lower Lakes Towing Ltd., and she is to be brought under Canadian registry. As yet, no renames for any of the vessels have been announced, but they almost certainly will occur.

Meanwhile, work is progressing in the north slip at Sarnia on the \$13 million repowering of Lower Lakes Towing's 1953-built SAGINAW. The new engine was railed from Toronto to Sarnia and will be installed in time for SAGINAW to resume operation this spring. SAGINAW, (a) JOHN J. BOLAND (iii)(99), previously was powered by steam turbine machinery.

With the weather around the Great Lakes area staying wintry with much above average snowfall during February, the demand for road salt has stayed strong, particularly in U.S. cities. When we prepared our lay-up lists for the February issue, CSL ASSINIBOINE, CANADIAN OLYMPIC and ALGOMARINE were still hauling salt out of Goderich. Although the ASSINIBOINE subsequently was put into winter quarters at Sarnia, the OLYMPIC and ALGOMARINE have continued to run and it appears they will do so for the foreseeable future, possibly being relieved by other ships as spring approaches. All three Algoma tankers on the lakes, ALGOSAR, ALGOEAST and ALGOSEA also remain in operation, running from Sarnia down to Lake Erie and up to the Soo.

Another ship that has seen mid-winter service has been the Essroc cement carrier STEPHEN B. ROMAN, which fitted out at Toronto early in February and ran most of the month, carrying cement to both Toronto and Oswego. As the ROMAN cannot get into Rochester because of river silting, Essroc's Rochester facility was being supplied from Oswego.

It has been confirmed that, weather permitting, the Welland Canal will open for commercial vessel traffic at 0800 on March 20, while the St. Lawrence canals will open at 0800 on March 22. The target date for the opening of the Soo Locks continues to be March 25.

In mid-February, Transport Desgagnes Inc. announced that it had acquired another tanker. The double-hulled ice-class vessel of 18,000 dwt, has been purchased from the Besiktas Group of Turkey, which had her built late in 2007 at its own Gisam shipyard at Tuzla. To be named SARAH DESGAGNES, she will be delivered at Quebec City in May and should be in service between Quebec and Montreal by mid-June.

During the winter months, the McAsphalt Marine Transportation Ltd. tug EVERLAST and barge NORMAN McLEOD have been operating on the east coast under a 90-day charter to the Irving Oil interests. On the evening of February 14, while off Rockland, Maine, on a voyage from Saint John to Virginia, a fire broke out aboard the barge, caused by the rupture of a fuel line feeding the cargo heating unit. Two crew members, including the chief engineer, suffered burns and were taken off by a United States Coast Guard rescue helicopter, and the tug and barge then put in to Portland, Maine. The fire was contained with relatively minimal damage to the barge and, at last report, the two injured crewmembers were recovering in a satisfactory manner. We assume that EVERLAST and NORMAN McLEOD will be back in McAsphalt service on the lakes this coming summer.