

# THE LIGHTSHIP



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lakehuronlore@advnet.net

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Terry Doyon (Editor)  
272 Elgin St.  
Sarnia, ON, N7T 5B6

Membership (annual) - \$12.00 (U.S.) \$18.00 (Can. funds)  
Send to: L.H.L. Port Huron Museum, 1115 6th St.,  
Port Huron, MI 48060 - 5346. Phone (810) 982-0891

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Mark Your Calendar** - Our third Dinner / Entertainment Meeting for 2003, a joint meeting with our friends; the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, will be held at the Port Huron Museum on Saturday, October 11th. The doors will be opened at 6:00 pm and the dinner, prepared by the Museum Guild, will be served at 6:30 pm. The cost is \$10.00 (U.S. funds) per person and your check, made payable to the Museum Guild, along with the enclosed yellow reservation slip, must be received by the closing date of Wednesday, October 8th. The guest speaker of the evening will be Ronald Beaupre of Port Elgin, ON who will present an interesting program entitled, *Perils of the Lakes*. As usual, we will hold a raffle and award interesting nautical prizes to many lucky winners.

**Slide Night** - Another Member's Slide Night will be held at the Museum at 7:00 pm on Saturday, October, 18th. Members and their guests are invited to present some of their favorite nautical slides, old and new. Tickets will be handed out during the evening and a door prize will awarded to the holder of the winning ticket.

**Marine Flea Market** – Lake Huron Lore, the Port Huron Museum and Acheson Ventures will be jointly hosting a Marine Flea Market on Saturday, October 25th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm at a new location, the Port Huron Seaway Terminal, located at 2336 Military Street in Port Huron. Bring your family and experience one of the most popular Marine Flea Markets on the Great Lakes!

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\*\*\* NAME THIS SHIP \*\*\*



\* Rev. Peter Van der Linden Photo \*

\* See Answer on Page 6 \*

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**Canadian Tankers Of The Great Lakes** – Noted Marine Historian, Columnist and Author Skip Gillham recently released Volume 4 in his series of Canadian Tanker books. The first three volumes covered the Imperial Oil fleet, Branch Lines & Soconav fleets as well as The Hall Corporation tankers. This latest book covers other Canadian shipping companies that operated tankers not covered by the first three books, and includes many photographs of various tankers as well as their histories. It also contains an excellent cross-referenced index. The soft-covered 82 page book can be obtained by sending a check or money order for \$21.00 to E.B. Gillham, Box 443, Vineland, ON, L0R 2C0. The other three tanker books can still be purchased for \$16.00 each.

## NAUTICAL NEWS

From the Files By Cy Hudson

*10 Years Ago ... (1993)*

Sept. 18 - The U.S.S. *GLADIATOR* (MCM-11) an Avenger-class minesweeper was commissioned at Peterson Builders in Sturgeon Bay for the U.S. Navy.

Sept. 20 - A time of tragedy, the tug *DUKE LUEDTKE*, GRT 73, owned by Luedtke Engineering Co. of Frankfort, MI, was sailing on Lake Erie with a three man crew, bound for Ashtabula from West Harbor, OH just before midnight when she began taking on water in the engine room. Captain Frank Hannan quickly made a radio call for help. The U.S. Coast Guard from Cleveland responded and dispatched two 41 ft. utility boats and two guardsmen went aboard the stricken tug. Seaman Michael O'Neill with Seaman Marvin Thompson entered the tug's engine room to investigate the cause of the leak. Suddenly at about 1:00 am on the 21st, the tug rolled over to port and sank in about 70 ft. of water, 10 miles off shore, 30 miles west of Cleveland. The three crewmen and Seaman Marvin Thompson managed to escape and jumped into the water to be rescued by the utility boats. Unfortunately, Seaman Michael O'Neill was trapped inside the sinking tug and was lost. His body was recovered the next day.

Oct. 2 - The McKeil Marine tugs *KAY COLE*, *GLENBROOK* & *GLENSIDE* pulled the Canada Steamship Lines *HOCHELAGA* from her Toronto lay-up berth, where she had been since November 1987, to begin her tow to the scrapyards. When the tow was out in the open water of Lake Ontario, the *GLENSIDE* left and the other two tugs towed the *HOCHELAGA* downbound to Pointe-au-Pic, near Montreal. They arrived there on the 7th to join with her former fleetmate *FORT ST. LOUIS* which had arrived the previous day from Montreal under the tow of the Panamanian tug /supply ship *PAMAR SALVOR* (ex. Canadian Coast Guard search and rescue vessel *JACKMAN*). The *HOCHELAGA* and *FORT ST. LOUIS* were then taken in tandem tow by the *PAMAR SALVOR* to Cartagena, Colombia where the *HOCHELAGA* was to be scrapped. The *FORT ST. LOUIS* had been sold to Belize interests and was not scrapped, but later renamed *CHRISTOS P.* by the Christos Shipping Corp. of Panama.

*20 Years Ago ... (1983)*

Oct. 5 The Misener-chartered *OTTERCLIFFE HALL* was rechristened *ROYALTON* (2) at Thunder Bay. She was given back her original name in 1985.

Oct. 9 - Pioneer Shipping Ltd.'s newly built Scottish bulker *SASKATCHEWAN PIONEER*, managed by Misener Transportation, was upbound in the Welland Canal enroute to Thunder Bay and her formal christening ceremonies.

Oct. 11 - The former Quebec and Ontario Transportation Co. Ltd.'s *BAIE COMEAU* (2), which had been sold in April, 1983 to Progress Overseas Co. S.A. Panama, sailed from Sorel, QC under Panamanian registry as the *AGIA TRIAS*.

Oct. 18 - The Caribbean class lake bulk freighter *PRAIRIE HARVEST* was launched by the Collingwood Shipyards Ltd. at Collingwood, ON. as Hull #227 for the Canada Steamship Lines, Montreal, QC. She was christened by Mrs. Leona Jarvis, wife of the chief commissioner of the Canadian Wheat Board and was watched by an audience of over 10,000 people. The *PRAIRIE HARVEST* entered service on April 6th, 1984. Her maiden voyage was to Thunder Bay where she loaded a wheat cargo for delivery to Port Cartier, QC.

Oct. 29 - Upper Lakes Shipping Ltd, Toronto, ON "new" ship, *CANADIAN EXPLORER* was christened at Port Weller Dry Docks. She was originally named *CABOT*, a package freighter, which was converted to a bulk carrier by replacing her bow and cargo section with that of the *NORTHERN VENTURE*, making her a rather unique "new" vessel.

Oct. 31 - The *SYLVANIA*, the 1905 built self-unloading lake bulk freighter, a product of West Bay Ship Building Co., West Bay City, MI, Hull #613, was towed from the Toledo Frog Pond where she had been in lay-up since May 11th, 1980. The two harbor tugs involved, the *KANSAS* and *WYOMING*, handed over the tow to the tug *OHIO* to be taken to Ashtabula, OH for dismantling by Triad Salvage. The *SYLVANIA* was in the

Bluewater area news when she was discharging her cargo of limestone at the Peerless Cement Co. Dock in Port Huron on June 1st, 1967. She was struck at 10:10 pm. by the Canada Steamship Lines package freight steamer *RENVOYLE* which had just departed the Point Edward, ON freight shed and was attempting to turn to go downbound when she lost control in the swift current just below the Bluewater Bridge. The *SYLVANIA* was holed on the starboard side and very quickly sank in 27 ft. of water. The *RENVOYLE*, although badly damaged, remained afloat. All upbound and downbound river traffic was delayed 24 hours causing a major



shipping back-up. Fortunately there was no loss of life in this incident. The *SYLVANIA* was eventually raised on June 12th by McQueen Marine Ltd. of Amerstburg, ON, and was then taken by the tugs *AMERSTBURG* and *ABURG* for repairs at the American Shipbuilding Yard at Lorain, OH. which were completed by October 12th.



As for the *RENVOYLE*, her troubles were just beginning. After receiving minor bow repairs at the Point Edward sheds she sailed to Port Credit, ON to discharge her cargo. When this was completed she departed for Kingston, ON and laid up there, awaiting her future. On October 1st, the *RENVOYLE* passed upbound in the Welland Canal, in tow of the tugs *GRAEME STEWART* and *G.W. ROGERS*, bound for Fairport, OH where she was held pending the outcome of the litigation arising from her accident with the *SYLVANIA*. Canada Steamship Lines later surrendered title to the U.S. Marshall who sold the *RENVOYLE* at an auction at Cleveland, OH on November 15th, for a \$21,000 bid from Acme Scrap & Metal Co. of Ashtabula, OH. She arrived at their yard on December 5th to be dismantled.

**F.Y.I.**

As of midnight, September 15th, 178 vessels, requiring a pilot, have passed upbound through the Bluewater area since the opening of the 2003 shipping season. In comparison, by this date in 2002, 211 vessels requiring pilots had passed, 217 vessels in 2001, and 251 vessels in 2000. *This number includes salt water vessels, passenger ships as well as some Canadian registered tankers. Many of the ships are repeat visitors.*

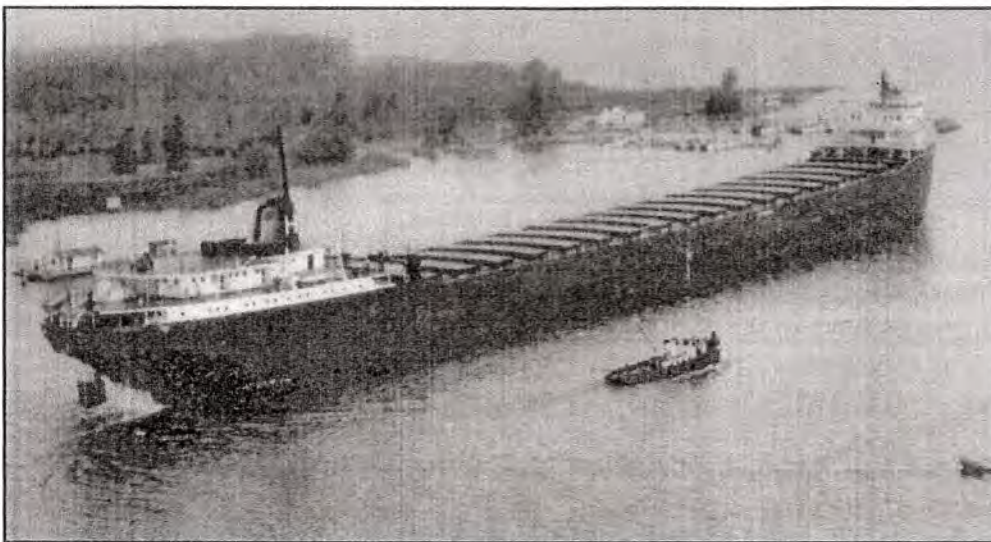
The Editor would like to thank Cy Hudson and Lakes Pilots Association Manager Bill Wager for their contributions.

## Bluewater Built

In September, 1952, the steamer *Charles L. Hutchinson* (3) began a fifty year sailing career on the Great Lakes. At the end of her journey, she would be the last straight-deck bulk carrier on the American side of the Great Lakes.

On the blue waters of Lake Huron at Bay City, Michigan, the *Charles L. Hutchinson* was built by Defoe Shipbuilding. This vessel would be one of the two largest ships built by Defoe. She measured 642.3 feet in overall length while a sister ship of 644 feet would follow the next year in a 1953. That ship would become the *Richard M. Marshall* (later the *Joseph S. Wood*, *John Dykstra* (1) and the *Benson Ford* (2).

The Saginaw River Marine Historical Society's photo collection has an aerial view of the *Hutchinson* (shown below) leaving the mouth of the Saginaw River for sea trials on Lake Huron.



The photo was taken in early 1952, since her maiden voyage was that September. Her first owner's colors are seen in the photo, for the Hutchinson fleet, with her stack black with the big letter "H" on it.

In 1962, the Hutchinson shipping interests ended their long Great Lakes business and sold their vessels. The *Charles L. Hutchinson* was sold to the Ford Motor Company and renamed *Ernest R. Breech*. At only ten years old, and the right size for Ford, she could use the

Rouge River like the other ships in her new fleet. The *Breech* would faithfully serve Ford for some twenty-six years, traveling from Lake Superior ports, down Lake Huron to the Rouge complex for Ford.

Of note is the fact that in 1966, the other large Defoe-built ship would join the *Breech* at Ford. This boat would carry the names *John Dykstra* (1) and *Benson Ford* (2). The two would sail together for about twenty years.

They seemed alike in some ways but were different, although both were built by Defoe.

By 1988, Ford would get out of the Great Lakes shipping business. The *Breech* would be spared the scrapper's torch and be sold to Kinsman Marine Transit Company, one of the oldest fleets on the Lakes, and renamed Kinsman Independent (3). She would be one of their largest ships and instead of hauling ore, she would carry grain.

For the next fourteen years, this boat would often sail



\* *Ernest R. Breech* downbound at Port Huron on Aug. 29, 1986 – Dick Wicklund Photo \*

from Duluth to Buffalo, passing our Bluewater area often. The end would come for her since she was not a self-unloader. On December 15, 2002, the *Kinsman Independent* (3) passed down under the Bluewater Bridge as the last straight-deck American laker, the end of an era for such vessels, of which there were hundreds before her. For those of us who live near Lake Huron, it is with good memories and a salute, we remember this Great Laker that sailed our way for fifty years. Besides, she was Bluewater built!



\* *Kinsman Independent* (3) downbound at Sarnia on Oct. 13, 1989 – Dick Wicklund Photo \*

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### *And Now You Know . . . .*

In the heyday of sailing ships, all war ships and many freighters carried iron cannons. Those cannons fired round iron cannon balls. It was necessary to keep a good supply of the balls near the cannon. But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck?

The best storage method devised was a square based pyramid with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of thirty cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon.

There was only one problem, how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding or rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate called a *monkey* with sixteen round indentations. But if this piece of plate was made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust and stick to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make *brass monkeys*.

Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too low, the indentations in the brass plate would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would roll off the *monkey*. Thus, it was quite literally, "Cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey!" And all this time, you thought this expression was terribly improper, didn't you?

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### *Answer to Name This Ship (Pg.2)*

***Hennepin*** (US 202088) Built in 1905 at West Bay City, MI as Hull # 614 by the West Bay City Ship Building Company. 504'-0" length x 54'-0" width x 26'-8" draft. 6,272 GRT. Launched as a) *Socapa* for the Superior S/S Co. (G.A. Tomlinson, Mgr.). Renamed b) *George G. Barnum* in 1915. Purchased by Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company and renamed c) *Hennepin* in 1936. Sold to Redlands S/S Company (composed of Gartland S/S and Reiss S/S Companies) in 1956. Converted to a self-unloader at Lorain, OH during the winter of 1956-57. Sold to Gartland S/S Company (Boland & Cornelius, Mgr.) in 1969. Sold for scrap to Marine Salvage and towed to Humberstone, ON in April, 1975. Scrapping of the vessel finally began in April, 1977.

# BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

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By Skip Gillham

## Choctaw

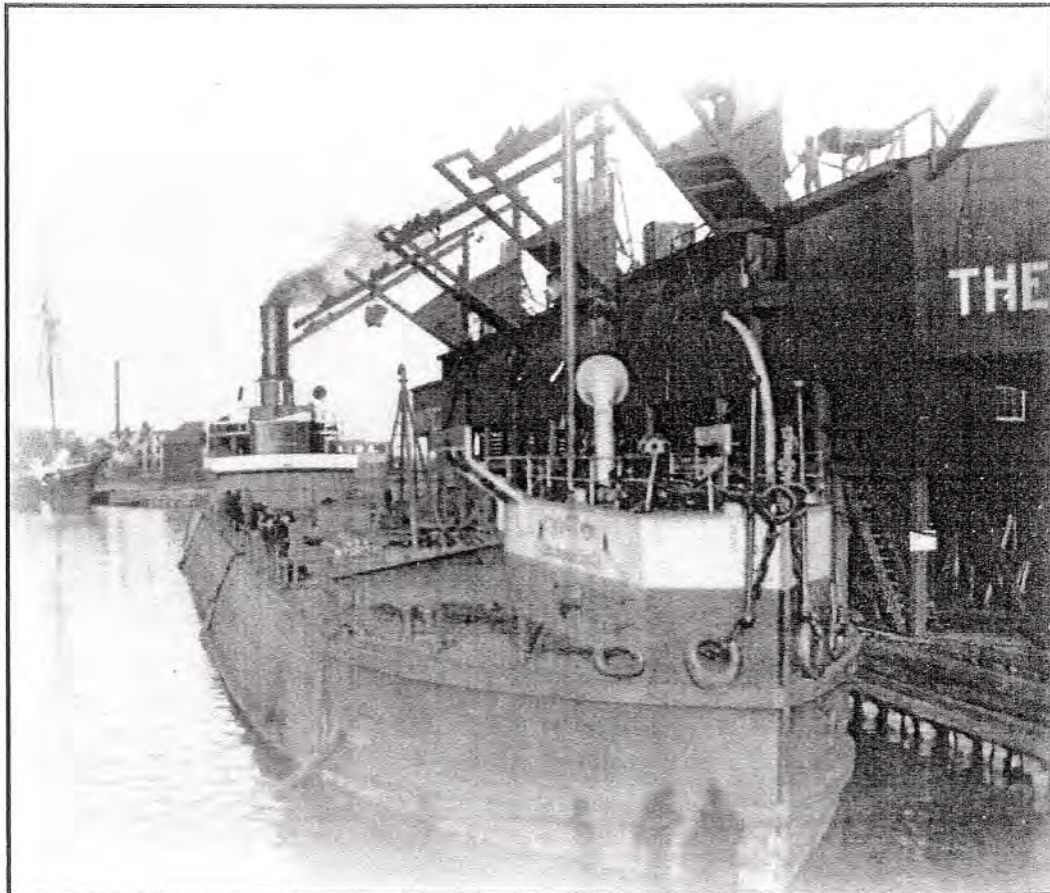
*Choctaw* (US 126874) was a steel bulk carrier of the monitor type. It was built at Cleveland in 1892 and joined the Lake Superior Iron Company. The 284 foot long by 38.1 foot wide vessel was registered at 1,573 gross tons, 1,256 net tons and powered by a 900 h.p. triple expansion steam engine of 17-29-47 x 36.

The vessel had some early troubles. A cylinder head blew crossing Lake St. Clair on April 19, 1893, and three lives were lost. The ship sank in shallow water near Sault Ste. Marie on August 12, 1896 following a collision with the *L.C. Waldo*.

*Choctaw* came under the banner of Cleveland Cliffs in 1898 and was used to carry iron ore, pig iron and coal. Her troubles continued. There was a grounding in fog on the St. Mary's River on May 25, 1900 and some coal had to be lightered before the ship was released on May 29. On August 3, 1900, she arrived at Ashtabula to be dry-docked to repair collision damage from a meeting with the *Alfred Mitchell* at Gladstone.

Later, on April 26, 1902, some bottom plates were punctured in a grounding at Marquette, and then, on September 7, 1904, she went on the rocks off Manitou Island, Lake Superior.

*Choctaw* was lost in Lake Huron on July 11, 1915 following a collision with the *Wahcondah*. The former was carrying coal and was bound from Cleveland to Duluth. All 20 on board were rescued but *Choctaw* was badly holed, rolled over and sank in about 200 feet of water.



*Choctaw* at Sheboygan, WI – Milwaukee Public Library Photo

# SALTY SPOTLIGHT



By D.R. (Doug) Schilz  
([saltydug@yahoo.com](mailto:saltydug@yahoo.com))

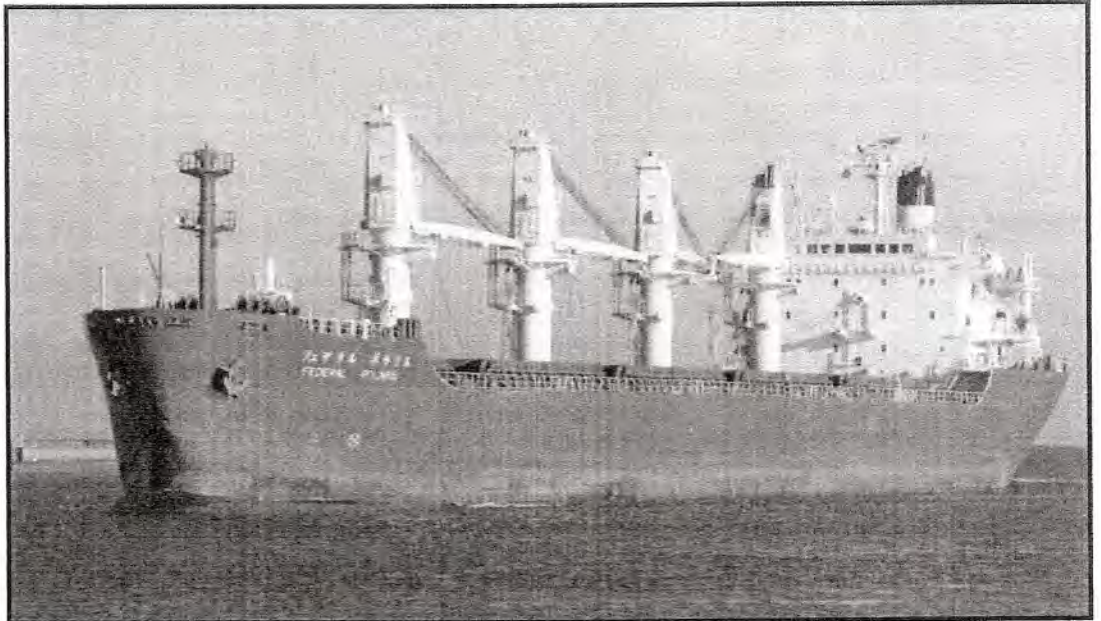
## M/V FEDERAL POLARIS

Built by Nippon Kokan K.K. at Shimizu, Japan as Hull #425  
Length - 599'-9" Breadth - 75'-11" Depth - 48'-7"  
GRT - 17,815 M. Bulk Carrier  
Main Engine - 9,500 bhp Sulzer

Since 1985 the *Federal Polaris* has been sailing onto the Great Lakes delivering a variety of cargoes to and from many lake ports. She made her first inland voyage arriving in November of that year. At that time she was registered in Japan. On her return in September, 1986, it turned out to be an eventful voyage. While sailing upbound on the St. Clair River on September 27 she was involved in a minor collision with the *Cvijeta Zuzoric*. The *Federal Polaris* sailed to Toledo for repairs and the *Cvijeta Zuzoric* received temporary repairs at Montreal.

Over the years she has visited many ports on the lakes including Windsor, Detroit, Toledo, Duluth, Cleveland, Hamilton and Milwaukee. Her flag of registry has changed a few times. Liberian, Barbados and now Bahamas. She has been on long term charter to Fednav and ownership has changed over the years as well. Originally owned by Hoyu Kaiun K. K., her ownership changed to Laker Ship Holding S.A. in 1992, and Sandviken Bulk AS in 1998.

She is one of three vessels built for long term charter to Fednav. The others being *Federal Asahi*, which now sails as the *Federal Agno*, and the *Federal Fuji*. Of interesting note is the fact that they are the same dimensions and design as the Olympic boats, (*Olympic Miracle* class) the difference being in the design of the deck cranes.



\* *Federal Polaris* downbound at Sarnia, November 14, 1990 – Doug Schilz Photo \*

Between the two companies a total of seven ships of this design were built. All of these have sailed on the Great Lakes. There will be more on the Olympic ships in a future column.

As *Federal Polaris* approaches her 20 year mark in 2005, we will probably see her sail the lakes for a few more years considering her handy size, the geared capacity that she has and the fact that she has appeared to have been well maintained over the many years that she has sailed.