

# THE LIGHTSHIP



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Mark Your Calendar** – Our first of four 2006 Dinner / Entertainment Meetings, which are joint meetings with our friends of the Marine Historical Society of Detroit, will be held at the Port Huron Museum on Saturday, April 1. The doors of the Museum will be opened at 6:00 pm and the dinner, prepared by The Museum Guild, will be served at 6:30. Tom Comtois will present “*Shipbuilding on the Saginaw River.*” Marine artist Robert McGreevy has graciously donated one of his beautiful limited edition prints to Lake Huron Lore to be offered as a raffle prize this evening. Tickets for this print will be sold during the evening for \$1.00 each. The winning ticket will be drawn and the winner will be allowed to choose from a selection of three different prints. What a great prize! (See the ad on Page 2). Please join us for an enjoyable and entertaining evening.

**New Members** – L.H.L. wishes to welcome aboard Victoria Conradson of Port Huron and Wayne Brusate, also of Port Huron.

*\* Extra Special Drawing \**

**Robert McGreevy**

**Internationally Known Marine Artist**

Has graciously donated one of his prints which will be the Grand Prize  
at the L.H.L. dinner meeting on the evening of April 1, 2006.

*The lucky winner will have the option of selecting **one print** from the following:*

The *PATTON*

The *WEXFORD*

The *FITZGERALD* passing the *BRADLEY*

These exquisite prints are valued at \$95 each.

\* Please Note \*

Tickets are \$1 each. Ticket holders must be present to win.  
The prints will be on display before and during the dinner.  
Canadian currency will be accepted at par.

*Our regular multi-prize raffle will not take place this evening*

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



See Answer on Page 4

## ELMGLEN Grounds on the St. Marys River

by Mark Shumaker

Grain commitments from Thunder Bay had continuously decreased throughout the 1980s, and by 1988 P&H Shipping's fleet had dwindled to four small and medium-sized bulkers. Due to grain shortages and continuous engine problems, *ELMGLEN* (2) had become P&H Shipping's spare boat. *ELMGLEN* made only five trips in 1988 and was laid up at Toronto in early June. Over the winter, the outlook did not improve and *ELMGLEN* did not fit out the next spring. The vessel remained tied up at Toronto's pier 35 through the summer months. The 1989 grain rush pressed *ELMGLEN* into service late in the year. The forward crews reported aboard September 14, and the vessel departed on the 18th bound for Thunder Bay. *ELMGLEN* carried eight cargoes of wheat from Thunder Bay to lower lakes and seaway ports in the fall of 1989.

By mid-December, a brutal winter had set in. So bad in fact, that the Soo locks were closed on December 28. After a slow trip up the St. Marys River and across Lake Superior, *ELMGLEN* arrived at Thunder Bay mid-afternoon on December 17 to load its last cargo for the year. The vessel spent the next two days loading 16,970 metric tons of wheat at various elevators. On departure, *ELMGLEN* worked in heavy ice from Thunder Bay harbor southward to Trowbridge Island.

*ELMGLEN* reached the ice-choked Soo the afternoon of December 20 and locked down, drawing 22 feet forward and 23 feet aft. Upon departure from the Poe Lock, *ELMGLEN* secured on the southeast pier to wait out problems that the tanker *ENERCHEM TRAVAILLEUR* was experiencing in the lower river. The *TRAVAILLEUR* had become beset in ice and was lying across the navigable channel at Oakridge Cut, near the entrance to West Neebish Channel. As a result, several additional downbound vessels had become stuck in the ice that had reached five meters thick in some areas of the river.

At 5 p.m. the next day, downbound vessels were advised to get underway and, after meeting upbound traffic above Nine Mile Point, transit the St. Marys River using the upbound track east of Neebish Island. From Mission Point to Nine Mile Point, *ELMGLEN* encountered heavy sea smoke and officers had to navigate by radar. From Nine Mile Point to Stribling Point, visibility improved and navigation aids were sighted.

DATE	TIME	PORTS AND LIGHTS	GYRO	MAG. COMP.	WEATHER	WIND	LOG	OFFICER	REMARKS
DEC 21	1700	Dept. South East Hall						R.F.	
	1730	MISSION						R.F.	
	1805	SIX MILE						R.F.	
	1935	NINE MILE						R.F.	" 2256
	2034	STRIBLING						R.F.	20 50 LIST Holed & STBD SAMP
Dec. 22	0102	Detour			Good V/Lt			G.P.	
	0105	Alcove	137	142	"	"		G.P.	
	0100	Wagon Returns	137	142	h. Sea	"		R.F.	
	0410	Traverse Pt.	137	144	"	"	11.2	R.F.	29.74 Pan
	0515	Middle Island	150	160	"	"	12.2	R.F.	
	1200	Trill Watch	151	159	H. Sea	11-11		G.P.	
	1550	Goderich Pier						R.F.	
	1600	Stuck in ice and aground with Tugs Heloise						R.F.	
23	0315	Alongside Goderich Pier						R.F.	Elmglen log book December 21, 1989
	0815	Commenced Unloading			clear - h. 16			R.F.	
	1915	Stopped Unloading						R.F.	

\* A Photo Showing Entries in ELMGLEN's Wheelhouse Log Book \*

At 8:30 p.m. *ELMGLEN* turned southbound at Stribling Point and again encountered heavy sea smoke, all the while navigating through heavy ice in darkness. The vessel continued southward navigating Coyle Point and Johnson Point using radar only. At 8:50 p.m., while the vessel was settling on its eastwardly track between Coyle Point and Johnson Point, Captain Robert Fleming noticed a slight list to starboard and by the end of a discussion with other officers *ELMGLEN's* list had grown to 3 degrees. After an inspection and sounding, it was determined that starboard ballast tank #8 had been holed and 15' of water had flooded the ballast tank. Four pumps were started, but it took ballasting port ballast tanks #1, 2, and 3 to trim the vessel.

Group Soo Coast Guard was made aware of the problem by monitoring a telephone conversation between *ELMGLEN* and the company office. The Coast Guard determined that *ELMGLEN* was in stable condition, and the vessel was advised to continue to Goderich, with Rogers City as a safe harbor if problems arose on Lake Huron. *ELMGLEN* passed Detour light at 1:00 a.m. December 22.

Due to vibrations and noise caused by sailing in heavy ice, the exact location of *ELMGLEN*'s grounding was never agreed upon. In the Coast Guard report, Captain Fleming stated that the only sighted navigational aid was buoy Q28, stationed off Coyle Point. Fleming stated that the buoy was passed "very fine" and that the course was immediately adjusted to bring the vessel closer to the center of the channel. The Canadian Transportation Safety Board's report estimates the vessel touched bottom while making the eastward turn in the vicinity of Coyle Point, St. Marys River.

At 4:00 pm, December 22, *ELMGLEN* entered Goderich harbor with a draft of 22' 5" forward and 25' 5" aft. The vessel labored in the harbor with the aid of tugs, but eventually stranded due to the vessel's draft and heavy ice conditions. Early on December 23, *ELMGLEN* was worked to the dock and the vessel was partially unloaded. Due to the heavy ice conditions in the harbor, the Canadian Coast Guard *SAMUEL RISLEY* was requested to help shift *ELMGLEN* into position to complete the unloading.

A visual inspection revealed a crack between starboard ballast tank 7 and 8. A diver confirmed a crack 4 meters long and between 50 and 100 millimeters wide located between the two ballast tanks. Hull plates had also been set up 200 mm, 1.2 meters inboard from the bilge keel on the starboard side.

P & H Shipping and the Coast Guard agreed that temporary repairs would be made, and if the vessel could be repaired up to class, permanent repairs would be delayed until *ELMGLEN*'s next five-year inspection, which was scheduled for August, 1990. The initial estimate that P & H received for permanent hull repairs was in excess of \$250,000.

After weighing all options, P & H Shipping decided to make temporary repairs and fit out *ELMGLEN* for the spring grain rush and then retire the vessel in the early summer. Upon retirement, *ELMGLEN* would be placed up for sale. Temporary repairs were made over the winter and *ELMGLEN* fit out early in 1990. In mid-June, *ELMGLEN* unloaded its last grain cargo, then layed up at Sorel and subsequently was retired by P & H Shipping.



\* A Harold Fricke photo of *ELMGLEN* (2) \*  
Downbound above the Bluewater Bridge at Port Huron on May 9, 1985

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

***WYCHEM 105*** (US 116841) Length: 456 ft., Breadth: 50 ft., Depth: 24 ft. GRT: 4,936 tons. Built in 1898 as *SAMUEL F.B. MORSE* for Bessemer S/S Co. at West Bay City, MI by F.W. Wheeler & Co. (Hull # 124). Sold to Pittsburgh S/S Co. in 1901. Sold to Wyandotte Trans. Co. for conversion to a tow-barge and renamed *WYCHEM 105* in 1954. Sold to Kovalachick Salvage Co. in 1955. Sold to Merritt, Chapman & Scott Corp. in 1956. Used as a temporary breakwater at Bay Village, OH in 1956/57 and also at Harrisville, MI in 1959. Sold to Roen S/S Co. in 1959 and used as a construction barge. The hull was eventually cut up and made into two 72 ft. barges and finally scrapped in 1982.

**From The Files** By Cy Hudson

***10 Years Ago ... (1996)***

The beginning of the 1996 navigation season followed one of the worst winters in recent memory. Most areas around the Great Lakes suffered from strong winds, plus near-record snowfall. Despite the heavy ice conditions, which caused considerable extra work for both the U.S. Coast Guard and the Canadian Coast Guard ice breakers, the shipping season opened, albeit occasionally delayed by the heavy ice which caused hull damage to several vessels. Some of the ships involved were the *ADAM E. CORNELIUS*, *WILFRED SYKES*, *COLUMBIA STAR*, *MEDUSA CONQUEST*, *BUCKEYE*, and *FRED R. WHITE JR.*

March 15 – The first transit of the Soo Locks took place when the USCG ice breaking vessels *NEAH BAY* and *KATMAI BAY* passed upbound through the Poe Lock followed by the *MACKINAW*.

March 19/20 – Overnight, high winds caused CSL's self-unloader *TARANTAU* to break loose from her moorings at Port Colborne and drift across the harbor where she came to rest alongside the *CANADIAN EXPLORER*. There was no damage to the two vessels, and the *TARANTAU* was returned to her original berth later in the day.

March 25 – The *ROGER BLOUGH* was the first commercial vessel passage at the Soo when she entered the Poe Lock, downbound at 12:38 am.

March 29 – The St. Lawrence Seaway opened for the 1996 season with the upbound passage of the salty *FEDERAL FUJI*, bound for the Canadian steel mill city, Hamilton, with a cargo of steel slabs. This was also the date of the first vessel to open the Welland Canal when the Canadian Coast Guard vessel *PIERRE RADISSON* passed through the locks, followed by *CANADIAN PROGRESS*, the first commercial ship to transit the canal.

March 31 – The Canadian Federal government closed the Canadian Customs office at Wallaceburg, ON as a result of the cessation of commercial shipping on the Chenal Ecarte and the Sydenham River. The *STELLA DESGAGNES* was the last bulk carrier to visit Wallaceburg in July of 1987. Tug and barge traffic continued in the waterway. The Canadian Customs office opened on March 25, 1846 and functioned for 150 years and 6 days.

April 2 – The official opening ceremony of the Welland Canal 1996 shipping season took place at Lock 3 when Captain Jens Hougesen of the *ALGOGULF* (2) received the traditional Top Hat.

April 4 – The Bluewater area was the scene of some extremely heavy ice conditions when the upbound vessel *TARANTAU* passed under the Bluewater Bridge, encountered the heavy ice and became stuck at the entry of Lake Huron Cut. As the *TARANTAU* was backing out of the ice in an attempt to free herself, she became stuck again only 50 feet from the Point Edward seawall. The trapped ship was freed the following day with assistance from the Great Lakes Towing tugs *COLORADO* and *LOUISIANA* as well as a nearby ice breaker. As expected, many local ship-buffs turned out to photograph the unusual sight.

***15 Years Ago ... (1991)***

March – The Columbia Transportation Division, Oglebay Norton Company announced the new names for the self-unloaders *SPARROWS POINT* and *LEWIS WILSON FOY*, which they acquired from the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in 1990. *SPARROWS POINT* will operate in 1991 as b) *BUCKEYE* (3), while the 1,000 foot *FOY* will sail as b) *OGLEBAY NORTON*.

March 2 – The first passage of the 1991 season at the Soo Locks was made by the downbound 1,000 foot *EDGAR B. SPEER*, carrying an ore cargo loaded in Two Harbors, MN, bound for Gary, IN. The passage through the lock, however, took 4-1/2 hours due to the heavy ice that had blocked the approach to the Poe Lock. The assistance of the *MACKINAW* was finally required to aid the *SPEER* into the lock.

March 26 – The Captain of Parrish & Heimbecker's upbound bulk carrier *WILLOWGLEN* received the traditional Top Hat when the 1943-built steamer opened the Welland Canal for 1991 commercial navigation.

# Bluewater Passages

By Dick Wicklund

## \* TED'S OLCOTT \*

In 1910, U.S. Steel's Pittsburgh fleet took delivery of another six hundred foot ore carrier, the *WILLIAM J. OLCOTT*. During those early years, after this fleet was formed in 1901, some fifteen new six hundred foot freighters were added in 1910, with more to come. The six hundred footers would be the thousand footers of one hundred years ago.

The *WILLIAM J. OLCOTT* served with little notoriety, or without any serious incidents. The vessel would spend



\* *WILLIAM J. OLCOTT* Upbound in Lake Huron above Port Huron \*

some time in lay-up during the fifty years from 1910 to 1960, but was mostly active hauling ore, stone, and coal. In lay-up from 1960 to 1968, she would never run again for Pittsburgh S/S Company.

In 1968, after her eight-year lay-up, the *OLCOTT* was sold to the Buckeye fleet, which became part of Kinsman not long after. She would return to service as the *GEORGE E. SEEDHOUSE*. Under the new name however, her sailing days would only last until 1975.

In a rare photo opportunity for me, she was up bound at Port Huron as the *SEEDHOUSE* on April 28,

1973. In 1975 she was sold to Bay Shipbuilding for use as a floating machine shop at Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Over the years, she was gradually cut down for this use, and was finally scrapped in 1993.

The Olcott name lives on however. In Duluth, Minnesota, the namesake of this ship built a mansion in 1904. The William J. Olcott home is beautifully restored and presently serves as a bed & breakfast establishment in the city's east end, a few blocks up from the lake where this steamer carried many cargoes.

An interesting photo of the steamer *OLCOTT* was taken by Ted Richardson, possibly around 1940. Ted worked on the Lakes, and from the deck of the *CALCITE*, or another vessel, he photographed the *OLCOTT*. She was painted up for a new season. From the deck of his vessel, Ted shot the *OLCOTT* up bound in ice, just north of the Blue Water Bridge.

Ted Richardson is well remembered in our blue water area long after he retired from sailing the Lakes. His interest in Great Lakes history included the preservation of our Huron Lightship, and his active maintenance of it over the years.

Ted's great photo of the *OLCOTT* reminds us of one ship that did its job, and did it well, as he did!



\* *GEORGE E. SEEDHOUSE* Upbound at Port Huron \*

# BLUEWATER AREA SHIPWRECKS

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*By Skip Gillham*

## \* WALLSCHIFF \*

The West German freighter *WALLSCHIFF* was on her maiden voyage to the Great Lakes when it was in a collision with the Cleveland-Cliffs freighter *PIONEER*. The accident occurred just south of the Bluewater Bridge on October 2, 1953 after the ship's pilot suffered a heart attack and the vessel veered in front of the downbound American bulk carrier *PIONEER*. The steel laden *WALLSCHIFF* sank and two lives were lost.

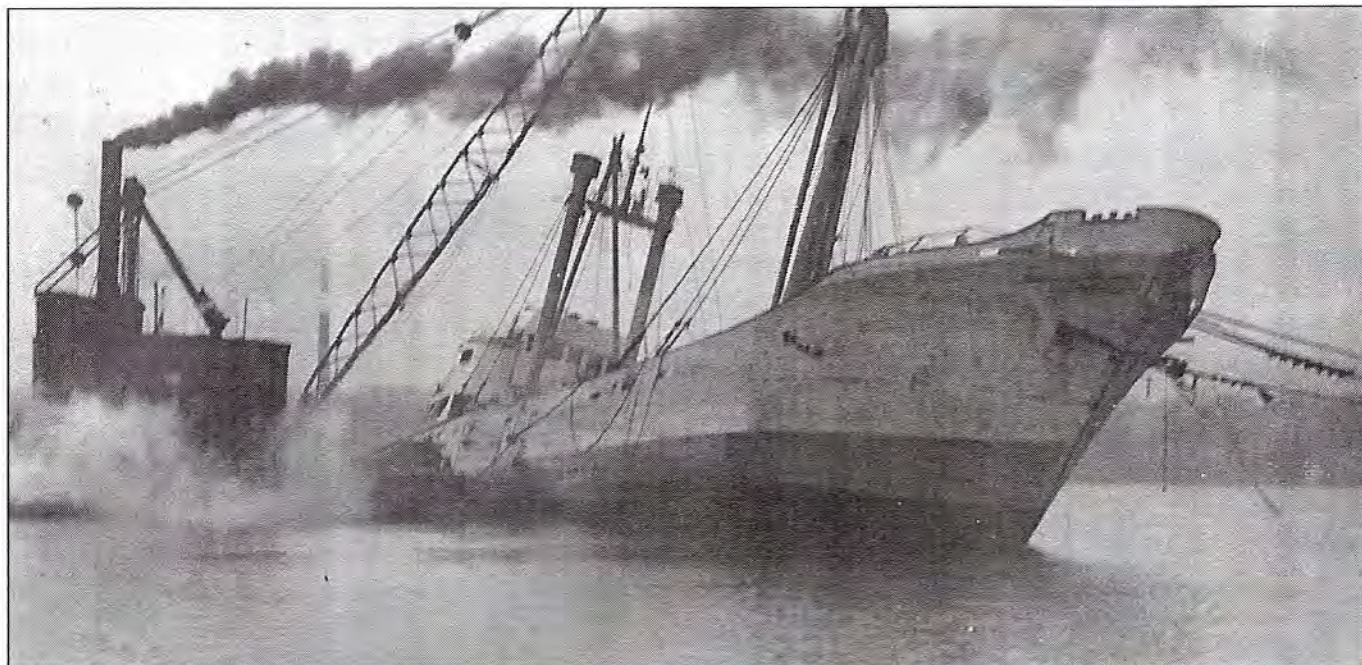
*WALLSCHIFF* was launched at Lauenburg, Germany on August 25, 1953. The 212 foot, 11 inch long cargo carrier was powered by a 1,000 horsepower diesel engine.

The sunken vessel was re-floated by McQueen in December, 1953 and taken to Amherstburg for winter work. It departed on April 13, 1954, under tow of the tugs *HELENA* and *THISTLE* and then taken overseas by the *HUDON*. *WALLSCHIFF* arrived at Hamburg, Germany on May 23, 1954, and was repaired, and returned to service as *WARRENDORP* later in the year.

The ship now sailed for the Lubeck Line until being renamed *CHIRICANO* in 1966 for the Florida-Panama Line. It moved to Honduran registry as *ADECOR I* in 1968 and to the Philippines as *LUZON TRANSPORT* in 1978.

Renamed *PREMSHIP I* in 1984, the vessel remained under the same flag for several owners. The ship was driven aground by Typhoon Mike at Iligan, Philippines on November 12, 1991, and was declared a total loss. The hull was re-purchased by her owners, salvaged and, in 1991, returned to service.

*WALLSCHIFF* never returned to the Great Lakes after the 1953 accident but may still be in service.



\* *WALLSCHIFF* aground in the St. Clair River, south of the B. W. Bridge \*

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# SALTY SPOTLIGHT



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

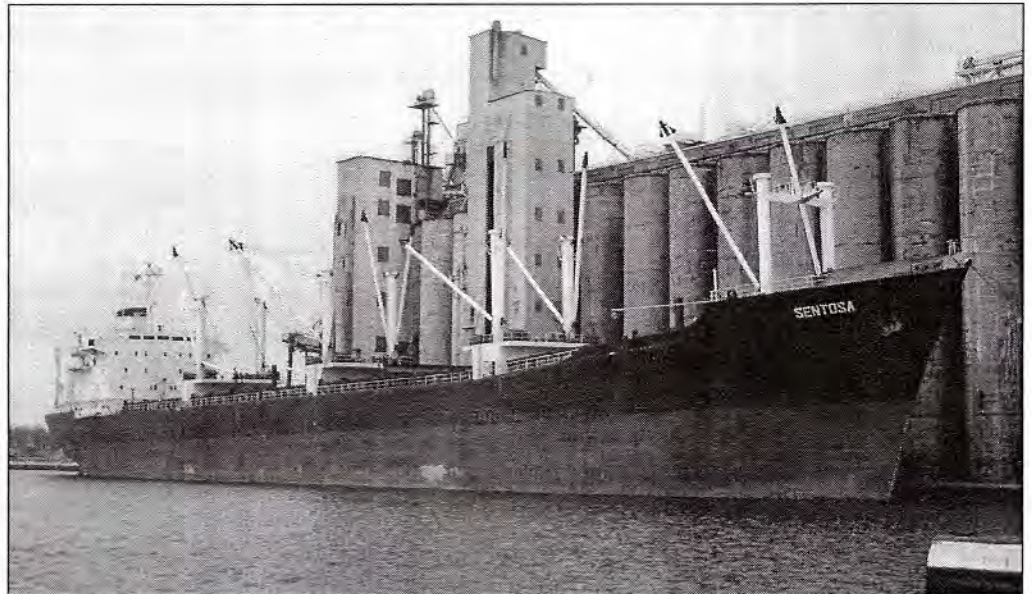
## \* SENTOSA \*

Built in 1975 by Austin & Pickersgill Ltd., Southwick, Sunderland, UK as Hull # 899.  
Length – 600' 6"    Breadth – 75'    Depth – 47' 1"  
15,684 GRT    M. Bulk Carrier  
Main Engine – 7,385 bhp Sulzer

Certainly one of the most well known ship designs of the 1970's was that of the B-26 design by Austin & Pickersgill. The design number 26 stands for the ship's 26,000 deadweight tonnage. Approximately 19 of these ships were built between 1967 and 1982. Many of these ships found their way into the St. Lawrence Seaway system, one being the *SENTOSA*.

Originally built as *LEON*, she first ventured onto the Lakes in 1978. She was owned by Leon Corp. and registered in Greece. Sometime between 1985 and 1986, she was sold to Seassign Marine Ltd., and her registry became Cyprus. In 1986 she was again sold, renamed *LEONTARI*, and her new owners were Prometheus Maritime Corporation. In 1991 she was sold again and renamed *ADMITOS*. Her owners became Fishnest Navigation Ltd., and her registry was Cyprus. It was on August 1st of that year that I photographed her transiting the Welland Canal on her upbound voyage with her destination being Chicago. This was her first transit under this name. She returned to the Great Lakes again in 1994, but under the new name *SENTOSA*. The vessel had been renamed in 1991, registered in Cyprus, and her new listed owners were Sentosa Shipping Ltd. Her inbound voyage in 1994 took her to Hamilton, Detroit and Chicago with a cargo of steel. She then sailed for Sarnia to load 16,401 metric tonnes of corn for delivery to Libya. She departed Sarnia on December 18.

With her departure from Sarnia, and from the Seaway, the *SENTOSA* would never again return to the Lakes. She sailed a few more years, but early in 1999 was sold to Indian shipbreakers. On February 2 of that year, the 24 year-old vessel arrived at Alang, India for eventual scrapping.



\* *SENTOSA* at Sarnia Elevators on December 17, 1994 \*  
Photo by Terry Doyon