



# Duluth Seaway Port Authority

Winter 2015-16

## NORTH STAR PORT



# What a difference a year can make

My mother impressed within me many philosophical sayings that are now part of my life. My wife loves that I've embraced them; she imagines our own sons one day adopting lessons she imparts. But, today, in the Coda house, it is my mother's one-liners that get used most often. We call them "Penny-isms," as my mother's name is Penny. This is one of my favorites: *"What a difference a year can make."*

## The Harbor Line

Vanta E. Coda II  
Port Director



I reflect on this often in life. When things are good, I think of what happened during the year that led to that moment. When life is rough, I ponder all that will happen in the coming year that could change my current situation.

Change always lies ahead, so we should plan for tomorrow and be prepared for the bad and the good.

I found myself pondering this as the new year began. What a difference a year has made here at the Port and within our Port Authority. The personnel shifting has been HUGE: a great new commissioner to replace a great outgoing one; a surprise departure from our staff followed by a new face of maritime; an expanded role for a long-time contributor; a new role for a close logistics colleague; and a monthlong retirement celebration with a beloved staff member.

All of this change could have been unnerving, but our team embraced the myriad changes and today feels as comfortable as it did just a year ago. That is good because the dark clouds of a natural resources recession are upon us. Global demand has slowed for the resources to which we are most connected: iron ore, coal, limestone, salt, oil and forest products. In the world of transportation and logistics, that

means a pullback, cost examination and supply chain restructuring. We continue to evaluate what we can do better to capture value for our customers and strengthen our region's performance. We are planning for the year ahead knowing things can change for the positive.

The most significant change within our Port Authority is the relationship with our terminal operating agent, Lake Superior Warehousing (LSW).

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority (DSPA), over its history, has utilized an agent to operate the general cargo docks and warehouses on the Clure Public Marine Terminal. DSPA personnel have not physically operated the dock since 1969, when we outsourced operations to an agent. We have had four operators since then. LSW is the longest serving and has been "making a difference" every year since its inception in 1991. With LSW, it's not only what a difference a year can make, but rather what a difference 25 years makes!

During my career, I've seen operations at ports around the country from Baltimore and Chicago to Houston and New Orleans. It was clear from the moment I arrived in Duluth that LSW was a superior dock operator. What also became clear was that neither of us could plan for future growth unless we sat down together to hammer out a new and different operating agreement.

What happened next rarely happens in a career. We asked ourselves a simple

question: "What can we be?" A simple question with lots of answers and some that didn't mesh at first.

At DSPA, we know what we are: an advocate for maritime commerce and multimodal transportation, dedicated to industrial development and global connectivity. LSW is internationally known for its dimensional and break-bulk cargo handling expertise, seamless transport services, 3PL warehousing and unparalleled customer service.

What we could be together was yet to be discovered. LSW and DSPA did something unique; we dismantled a legacy agreement and designed an entirely new one that aligned our energies and expertise to serve regional industries even more efficiently.

We rediscovered how much stronger our organizations can be working in partnership to expand global logistics opportunities. Today, DSPA joins with LSW to celebrate its first 25 years of terminal operations and look ahead to many more. We have committed to extend this partnership for another decade and build on five-year plans for growth. In the months ahead, we will roll out a new marketing campaign that focuses on Duluth's connections to the world's supply chain.

As we move through winter and into our next shipping season, I feel energized and excited about what we can be. It really is true . . . what a difference a year can make. Thanks, Mom!



The Port Authority celebrates the extension of its 25-year partnership with Lake Superior Warehousing and the expansion of global logistics opportunities for shippers and customers alike.

Kate Ferguson

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**About North Star Port**

This magazine is produced by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority; Adele Yorde, PR director. The magazine was prepared for publication by Larry Fortner, editor, Fortner WordWorks; and Julie Zenner. *North Star Port* is printed by Pro Print of Duluth and mailed by BarCodes Plus of Superior.

# NORTH STAR PORT

Winter 2015-16 / Volume 47, Number 4



**4 Piling it on**  
Removing sawmill waste breathes new life into Radio Tower Bay



**6 Frosty, not frozen**  
Ice-free, yet Great Lakes traffic slows as season winds to close



**8 Winter work booms**  
Fleets invest millions in upgrades while ships docked for layup



**10 Terminal operator marks 25th**  
Celebrating a moving milestone with Lake Superior Warehousing



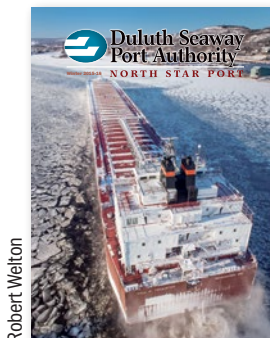
**18 Tribute to a treasured editor**  
Port bids final farewell to 'Fort'

John Heino



Birders flocked to Duluth in January to catch a glimpse of this ivory gull, an uncommon visitor from the Arctic.

**On the covers**



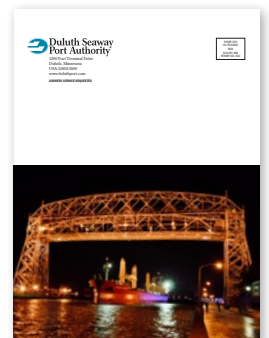
Robert Welton

**On the front**

The arrival of the *Paul R. Tregurtha* on Jan. 18 officially brought the 2015 navigation season to a close in the Port of Duluth-Superior.

**On the back**

Last saltie of the 2015 season, the *Federal Bering*, loaded with wheat and canola for Mexico, departs just before midnight Dec. 14.



Paul Scinocca

# Now call it ‘Restoration Bay’

*Radio Tower Bay has come a long way.*

At the dawning of America, the bay might have had a name in a Native American language, if it had a name at all; otherwise, it was just another lovely wide spot on what we now know as the Minnesota side of the St. Louis River Estuary.

By the late 1800s, the bay had been transformed, but not in a good way. It had become home to a terminal of the Duluth & Winnipeg Railroad and two boom-time sawmills. It also had a new name, Cedar Yard Bay. In 1894 alone, the mills cut 18 million feet of lumber there.

The good stuff was loaded onto D&W cars and moved to markets in the Upper Midwest. The sawmills' waste was dumped into the bay, which in short order became entirely unfit for fish, wildlife or human activity. The mills had produced literally tons of waste in the form of what became 167,000 yards of sediment, sawdust, wood chips and large slabs. As much as 84 percent of the 45-acre bay had wood waste more than a foot and a half thick, and much thicker in places, resulting in water depths of less than two feet within a 23-acre marshy area.

Simply put, the bay was nothing but a pulpy, soggy, waterlogged mess that could not sustain aquatic life.

Except for the mid 20th century installation of a copper array and other radio-signal transmitting hardware (still in use today), the bay sat unloved and virtually untouched for more than a century, though it had taken on a new name, Radio Tower Bay.

But then the course of history, if not the current of the St. Louis River itself, took a new turn, and in the 21st



Here are just a few of the 460 pilings that were pulled from the bottom of the polluted Radio Tower Bay.



There was nothing glamorous about the cleanup work, but today the turnaround is complete and 29 of the bay's overall 45 acres are once again fit for aquatic life.

century, Radio Tower Bay, just upstream from the local landmark Oliver Bridge, was identified as the site of a major restoration project.

In 2012, with plans and money in hand (see sidebar), crews went to work. Often it was cold, wet, gritty work. “This is boots on the ground, boots in the mud” restoration work, said the DNR's

John Lindgren, a supervisor during early stages of the project, in an October 2014 interview with the *Duluth News Tribune*.

‘People can get in there now with their boats and canoes. This project is truly creating a legacy.’

–Martha Minchak, Radio Tower Bay project manager for the Minnesota DNR

Courtesy Minnesota Land Trust

Courtesy Minnesota DNR

Along the way, the DNR's Martha Minchak became project manager for the construction phase of the work. For starters, 460 formidable huge wooden pilings that had once supported the D&W railbed and tracks had to be removed.

That made way for dredges to work their way through the packed wood and organic waste as the bay was cleaned clear to the bottom for the first time in more than a century, and the waste was hauled or sluiced away in an ingenious pipeline system that saved millions of dollars versus hauling it away by truck. (The slurry has been dried and will be used as compost, clean fill or fuel at other nearby restoration sites, among them a 10-acre parcel on the former U.S. Steel location.)

Today the remarkable turnaround is complete, and 29 of the bay's overall 45 acres are once again fit for aquatic life. Planners expect that the bay's bottom, now clear of wood waste, will recharge itself and will support native fish, waterfowl and plant species. In addition, 8 acres have been seeded with wild rice, another important native plant long lost to the bay. Part of the restored bay includes a 5.4 acre hole, 6 to 8 feet deep, to provide winter habitat and a summer refuge for game fish. Anglers will welcome the return of the bay's walleye, lake sturgeon, longnose sucker and other native species.

Meanwhile, as this project wraps up, it stands as just one of 60 different projects on 28 different sites around the Estuary that are completed, under way or planned.

Minchak said that by last fall she was seeing fishing boats beginning to buzz around Radio Tower Bay. "People can get in there now with their boats and canoes. This project is truly creating a legacy."

– Larry Fortner



Pulling a piling from the bottom of Radio Tower Bay.

Courtesy Minnesota Land Trust

## Where the money and support came from

Leading the way on the Radio Tower Bay restoration project was the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources with the assistance of the Minnesota Land Trust and the St. Louis River Alliance. Money to make good things happen came from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (\$2.4 million over two phases) through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Minnesota DNR's St. Louis River Restoration Initiative (\$2.5 million via the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund, the Legacy Amendment). Contributing partners were the city of Duluth, the Duluth Economic Development Authority, the Minnesota Land Trust, Minnesota Power and Marine Tech.

# 2015 Season wraps up: Ice-free Lakes can't offset low tonnage tally



Travis Chadwick

When temps in Duluth drop well below zero and cold air moves across warmer water, sea smoke (also known as steam fog) rises from Lake Superior and shrouds the shoreline, providing the perfect backdrop for the *Paul R. Tregurtha*, last laker of the 2015 shipping season, to glide into Port on Jan. 18.

After two of the most brutal winters on record, a virtually ice-free close on the Great Lakes just could not help compensate for the drop in tonnage during the 2015 shipping season—the lowest since 2009. Sadly, it would have been the year to make hay with late season deliveries, but the demand wasn't there as iron ore cargoes continued to tumble during the final quarter.

Here in the Twin Ports, iron ore shipments remained over 20 percent behind 2014, off by nearly the same amount when compared to five-year averages. Steelmakers and pellet producers continued to struggle with the global glut of ore and the dumping

of foreign steel into U.S. markets at low prices, all of which reduced demand for domestic product—idling mills and mines and causing layoffs of thousands across northeastern Minnesota.

While iron prices are expected to remain fairly stagnant in the months ahead, industry officials are hopeful that increased trade sanctions and enforcement will enhance domestic production in 2016.

Admittedly, good news is in short supply in our regional markets. There are few bright spots in the season-end tonnage report for the Port of Duluth-Superior. However, there was a welcomed nine percent uptick in grain

shipments and a strong performance in the heavy-lift and project cargo sector that kept foreign-flag vessel visits on par with previous years.

“There is one more uplifting tale to tell in this season recap,” said Vanta Coda, Port Authority executive director. “While freight that moves through our Clure Public Marine Terminal by truck and rail doesn't get counted in the Port's final *marine* tonnage total, it is worth noting that we experienced a 41 percent surge in tonnage moved via water, road and rail transport at our general cargo terminal last year, and projections for 2016 already look equally strong.”

Diane Hilden



The 1,000-foot *American Integrity*, loaded with 65,408 short tons of coal, makes quite a splash departing in late October.

Robert Welton



Crews offload pressure vessels from South Korea headed to Alberta.

Paul Scinocca



*John G. Munson* lights up the C. Reiss Terminal while offloading limestone.

## 2015 at a Glance

	SHORT TONS	% CHANGE*
Iron Ore	13.9M	-21.8%
Coal	13.4M	- 5.1%
Grain	1.4M	+8.9%
Other (Stone, cement, salt, etc.)	4.1M	-4.9%
Overall tonnage	32.9M	-12.5%
Vessel visits	757	-16.0%

\* Compared to 2014 season

## Firsts & Lasts

### Notable 2015 passages

First Laker Out	03/23/15	5:29 p.m.	<i>John G. Munson</i>
First Laker In	03/30/15	10:33 a.m.	<i>Edwin H. Gott</i>
First Saltie In	04/13/15	12:12 p.m.	<i>Kom</i>
Last Saltie Out	12/18/15	6:34 p.m.	<i>Federal Bering</i>
Last Traffic In	01/18/16	9:23 a.m.	<i>Paul R. Tregurtha</i>



*Volgaborg* glides into port Nov. 24 to load spring wheat at CHS in Superior.

Jonathan Dyess

# U.S.-flag fleets to invest \$110 million during winter layup

U.S.-flag vessel operators on the Great Lakes have committed more than \$110 million to maintain and modernize their vessels in 2016—despite steel dumping that severely impacted cargo movement during this past shipping season.

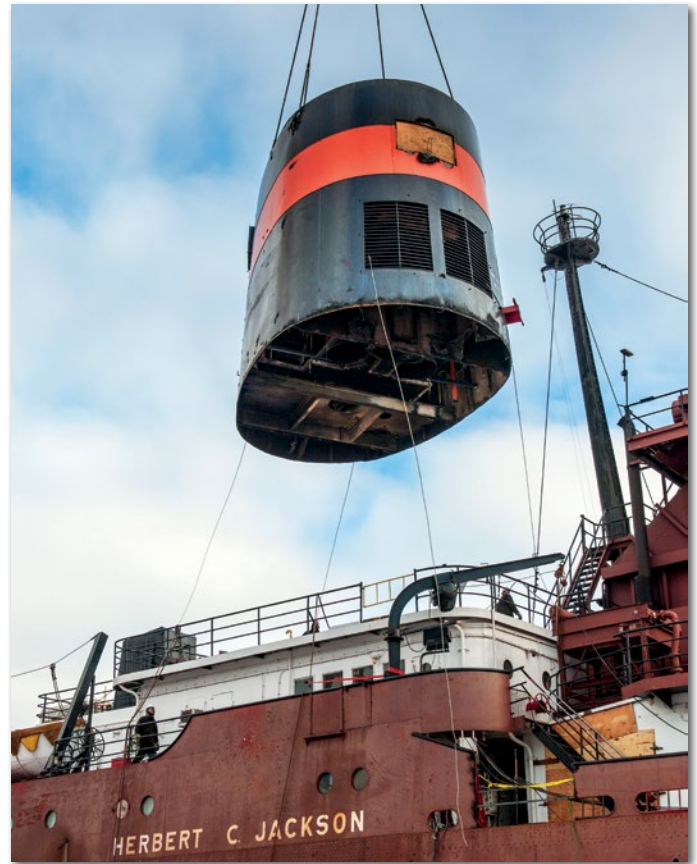
The investment includes approximately \$60 million for typical winter layup maintenance and repair work plus another \$50 million in projects that involve repowering vessels or installing exhaust scrubbers.

Fraser Shipyards is immersed in one of the major repowering projects. The *Herbert C. Jackson* arrived at the Superior facility on Dec. 11. It was the last steam-powered ship in Interlake Steamship Company's fleet and is being converted to a highly automated diesel propulsion system that will significantly reduce emissions. It is the final phase of the company's 10-year, \$100 million fleet modernization effort.

This is the first major repowering project since the 1980s for Fraser Shipyards, which recently celebrated its 125th anniversary and has invested considerably in its infrastructure and people to accommodate a project this size.

"It is a huge step forward for our shipyard and what we hope is the first of many large projects," said Tom Curelli, Fraser's vice president of engineering, environmental services and governmental affairs. "We have added almost 2,000 feet of new dockage and completely upgraded the electrical in the yard."

The Great Lakes Fleet's steamship, the *John G. Munson*, is undergoing a similar repowering project at Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding in Sturgeon Bay, Wis. Two other U.S.-flag vessels are being fitted with exhaust gas scrubbers this winter: the *James R. Barker* and the *Lee A. Tregurtha*.



Robert Welton

Fraser Shipyards has nearly 70 people dedicated full time to repowering the *Herbert C. Jackson*. Crews removed the ship's stack to extract the boilers and steam propulsion plant before lowering in two, new dual-fuel diesel engines.



Robert Welton

On the *Edwin H. Gott*, Michael Kolenda (foreground), Great Lakes Fleet engineer, and Aurel Carina, MaK service engineer, remove heads from the starboard main engine as it undergoes a complete overhaul, part of routine winter maintenance.

## Layups: Seven Lakers are wintering in Port of Duluth-Superior

VESSEL	ARRIVAL	CARRIER	BERTH
<i>Indiana Harbor</i>	11/03/15	American Steamship Co.	Enbridge Dock
<i>Herbert C. Jackson</i>	12/11/15	Interlake Steamship Co.	Fraser Shipyards
<i>Edwin H. Gott</i>	1/14/16	GLF/Key Lakes	Port Terminal Berth 1
<i>American Century</i>	1/14/16	American Steamship Co.	Port Terminal Berth 6/7
<i>Phillip R. Clarke</i>	1/15/16	GLF/Key Lakes	Port Terminal Berth 4
<i>Kaye E. Barker</i>	1/15/16	Interlake Steamship Co.	Fraser Shipyards
<i>Paul R. Tregurtha</i>	1/18/16	Interlake Steamship Co.	Midwest Energy

Seven vessels are wintering in the Twin Ports this year—creating work for boilermakers, welders, electricians and other skilled craftsmen with Fraser Shipyards beyond the repowering project. The seasonal work extends from bow to stern as engines are overhauled, conveyor belts replaced and hatch covers repaired. The Lake Carriers' Association estimates that a wintering vessel generates, on average, an additional \$800,000 in economic activity in the community in which it is moored.



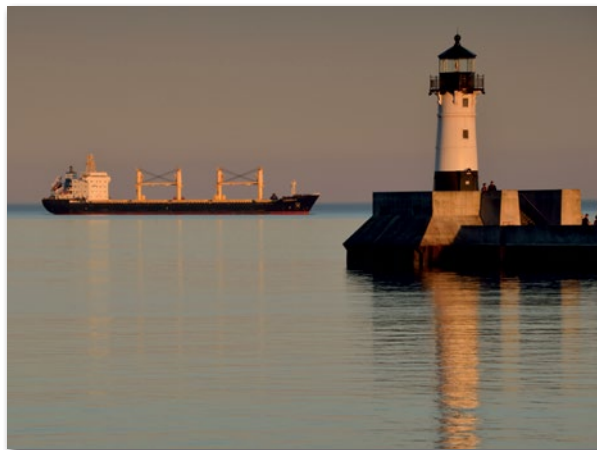
# Captive *Cornelia* captivates community

It became almost a fixture on the horizon. Casual boat watchers and seasoned mariners alike were captivated by a highly unusual occurrence just off the Duluth ship canal in November and December. The German-owned vessel *Cornelia* was detained at anchor for six weeks while officials investigated alleged environmental violations.

Multiple agencies and countries were engaged in the case, which involved enforcement of both international maritime law and U.S. federal regulations.

The result was a complex legal entanglement that took longer than anticipated to sort out and settle. Few details have emerged into specifics of the agreement eventually reached or where the “violations related to the discharge of oily water” actually occurred—however, they did not take place in or around the Port of Duluth-Superior.

The vessel was finally allowed to depart after a security agreement was reached with the ship’s owners/operator. The ship sailed out beneath the Aerial Bridge at 9:11 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 18, enabling her to clear all locks on the St. Lawrence Seaway ahead of season closures.



Paul Scinocca

*Cornelia* became a fixture on the horizon during her stay.

## MERC marks milestone



Chris Mazzella

*Paul R. Tregurtha* loading MERC’s 500,000,000th ton.

Midwest Energy Resources Company (MERC) marked a milestone in mid-December, transshipping its 500 millionth ton of coal. To put it in perspective, that amount of coal piled on an 80-acre base (the size of MERC’s coal storage area) would tower one mile high. Spread over 56 square miles (size of the city of Superior), it would be 12 feet deep!

MERC included those fun facts when it announced that the 500 millionth ton was reached on Dec. 14, with the loading of Interlake Steamship Company’s *Paul R. Tregurtha* for DTE Electric Company.

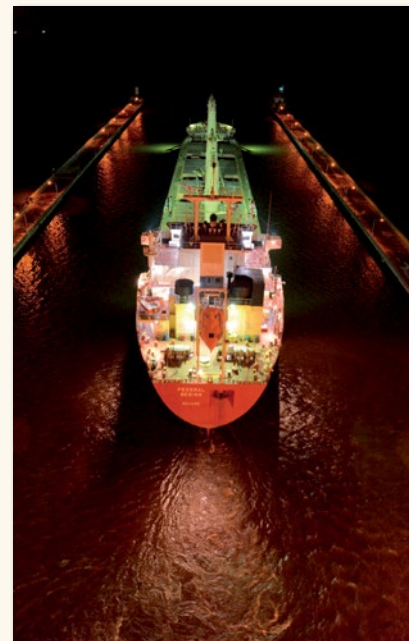
“The 500 millionth ton transshipped represents another significant MERC milestone, along with the loading and transshipment of our 10,000th vessel, American Steamship Company’s *American Century*, on Nov. 9,” said MERC President Fred Shusterich. He credited the achievements to hard work and the dedication of MERC employees.

## Last outbound saltie also marks a first

One of six newly built bulk carriers in the Fednav fleet marked two milestones in December—completing its first full transit of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway system *and* closing out the international side of the 2015 shipping season in the Port of Duluth-Superior.

The *Federal Bering* arrived in the Twin Ports just before midnight Dec. 14 and departed beneath the Aerial Bridge four days later with a split load of 21,000 metric tons of wheat and canola bound for Mexico—making it the Port’s last outbound “saltie” of the season.

The *Federal Bering* and five sister ships were built by Oshima Shipbuilders in Japan and delivered in 2015. The environmentally advanced vessels consume 28 percent less fuel and produce 28 percent fewer emissions than similar ships built for the company just a decade ago.



Mary T. George

*Federal Bering* departs in midnight silence.

# In it for the long haul

## *Lake Superior Warehousing turns 25*

By Julie Zenner

A relationship is solid when both parties see it lasting well into the future. That is the case with the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and its terminal operator, Lake Superior Warehousing. The two recently marked their 25th anniversary of collaborating to ensure a smooth, steady flow of general cargo through the Port of Duluth by signing a new 10-year agreement.

“There’s no good reason to change now,” said Vanta Coda, Port Authority executive director. “We have built a solid base and platform to grow and support our region’s economy.”

Lake Superior Warehousing (LSW) has operated the Port Authority’s Clure Public Marine Terminal and its associated warehouses since 1991. The facility’s robust infrastructure combined with LSW’s strengths in customer service

and seamless transport have established Duluth as a port of choice for moving breakbulk and heavy lift cargoes safely and efficiently through the heartland of North America.

“We couldn’t do our job without a great facility, which the Port Authority offers. In turn, we give our utmost to uphold our end of the partnership—to provide high quality customer service and support business in the region,” said Jonathan Lamb, LSW president. “We’re joined at the hip.”

The relationship was a welcome match in the early 1990s as the Port Authority found itself between terminal operators, facing both labor challenges and a need to find new cargoes to replace the loss of global food aid shipments through the Great Lakes.

“Things were bleak,” recalled Davis Helberg, executive director of the Port Authority from 1979 to 2003. “Productivity was low, ships were often delayed, and no one seemed willing to operate here. As far as general cargo was concerned, we were almost ready to throw in the towel.”

That changed when two established area businessmen, Dennis Hallberg and Tony Phillippi, along with an associate, Gary Nicholson, formed Lake Superior Warehousing and secured the contract to manage the terminal. Hallberg and Phillippi also co-owned Lakehead Constructors, a Superior-based industrial contractor, and Hallberg owned Kirscher Transport, a Minnesota trucking firm.

Nicholson, who had operated a terminal for Kirscher Transport, was named managing director of LSW and soon was promoted to president. He, along with Hallberg and Sam Browman, for-



Robert Welton

Generators from Finland bound for North Dakota.

mer Port Authority trade development director, traveled the globe, marketing the port and chasing new cargoes.

“We hustled all the time during those early years,” Hallberg said. “Turning things around took a long time. It didn’t happen overnight.”

“Lake Superior Warehousing came in and really built the business,” Coda said. “They recognized the value of rail and truck access, and that, while marine traffic was the core of the Port’s operations, it was not sustainable on its own.”

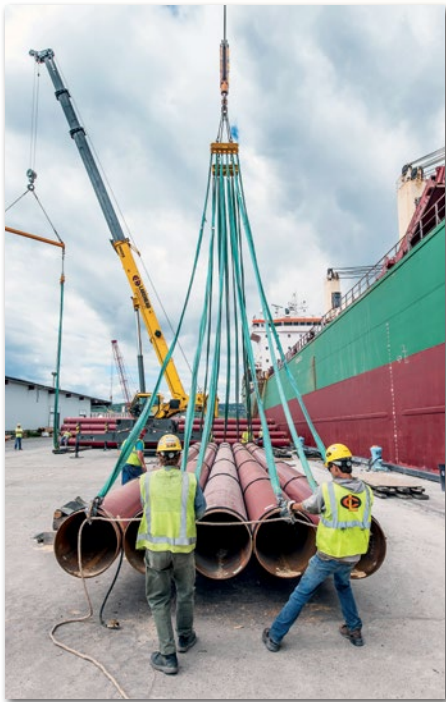
Under LSW’s management, Clure Public Marine Terminal operations expanded into new accounts for the handling, storage and distribution of traditional and nontraditional cargo. Paper products, lumber, steel castings and steel coil became leading commodities. Energy-driven project cargoes, like enormous generators, transformers and, more recently, wind turbines began moving with greater frequency through the Port.

Time and again, the Port and the people of LSW have proved themselves



DSPA

LSW’s Gary Nicholson (left) worked closely with Ed Clarke on heavy lift moves in the early 2000s.



Offloading 13,313 sections of pipe from Greece.

to clients—from handling the largest single load ever carried on North American railroads to date (a gigantic hydro cracker reactor that required a 36-axle Schnabel car for delivery to Alberta, Canada, in 2005-2006) to seven shipments of wind turbine components for ALLETE Clean Energy in 2015.

Ed Clarke, now construction manager for North West Redwater Partnership, has shepherded many heavy lift loads through the Port of Duluth bound for oil-recovery projects in Canada. It was he who arranged the transport of the hydro cracker by ship and rail, a job two years in the making.

“I don’t like surprises,” Clarke said at the time, calling Duluth the best equipped port that he worked with and its skilled and savvy workers superb. “It takes everybody working together, I couldn’t ask for better.”

The Port’s centralized location, with access to four Class I railroads and proximity to Interstate 35 and other major highways, contributes to the Port of Duluth’s general cargo and heavy-lift success, but Lamb believes there is more to it than just infrastructure assets.

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“Since Lake Superior Warehousing took over operating duties at the Port of Duluth, it has handled overweight and over-dimensional traffic with great success and safety. All moves were passed to the respective railroads and trucking companies and delivered to the job sites without incident or damage. This is an outstanding record.”

Ed Clarke, North West Redwater Partnership

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“Lake Superior Warehousing has an excellent workforce that knows how to handle specialized products and is focused on customer service,” Lamb said. “In some places, different groups or entities handle phases of cargo as it moves through a port. Here, we believe in a seamless process where the same people involved at arrival help get it out the door.”

Capt. Sinisa Soljadic, master of the Antigua-Barbuda-flag *Fortune*, was full of praise for Lake Superior Warehousing and its people following a call on the Port of Duluth in July. In a follow-up letter to Lamb, he wrote that he has visited ports all over the world in his 25 years at sea and finds Duluth to be unique.

“Your port is quite different. You are one good and compact working family, ready to do the best for yourself, but also for the ship and its crew,” Soljadic wrote. “Many thanks for the nice hospitality, help and support during our stay in the Port of Duluth.”

“We have good owners and good managers, and that reflects on all of us,” said Tim Rogers, LSW lead foreman, who has worked the Duluth docks for 43 years and was among the company’s first employees back in 1991. “People take pride in their work and try to make the Port of Duluth user friendly.”

In addition to overseeing the maritime operations at Clure Public Marine Terminal, LSW handles its storage and transload services. The facility is a distribution center for pulp, paper, lumber and other products that regional businesses need to store, package and ship—with multi-modal access to road, rail and water transportation options.

“If you go back to 1991 when there was virtually no activity and compare that to where we are today, it is quite significant,” Lamb said. He noted that, in 2015, Lake Superior Warehousing handled some 25,000 truckloads, well over 4,000 rail cars, plus a variety of maritime vessels. “Things have definitely changed. The volume is up, we have diversified types of cargo and products, and we play a more prominent role in supporting the region’s economy and supply chains.”

“Lake Superior Warehousing is not just a strong maritime cargo handling company, it enables us to be a value-added port and terminal,” Coda said. “We have worked long and hard together to service the supply chain needs that make our region’s industries more globally competitive.”



Pressure vessels from South Korea, bound by rail for Alberta, being offloaded from the *BBC Mont Blanc*.

## Sale of Georgia-Pacific site will preserve industrial waterfront

New owners of the former Georgia-Pacific plant in Duluth plan to preserve the industrial nature of the bayfront facility, which was shuttered in October 2012. Twin Ports trucking company owner Jeff Foster and his wife, Toni, purchased the former hardboard manufacturing plant. They plan to develop the property as a warehouse and logistics center with an industrial incubator.

The Fosters will work with the city of Duluth, the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and other organizations to identify parties interested in locating to or expanding on the site, especially industrial or manufacturing operations. The 19-acre property has 350,000 square feet under roof, ample outdoor storage capacity, industrial-scale utilities and direct access to road, rail and water transportation routes.



Courtesy Jeff Foster

The former Georgia-Pacific plant in Duluth will become a logistics center and business incubator.

## Heritage ‘tugs’ at heartstrings

Here’s a story of maritime goodwill that will touch your heart. Local tug company Heritage Marine and its crew members covered the train fares and lunch costs so 31 members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Duluth and Superior and their chaperones could experience the Norwegian-themed Julebyen Christmas Village.

The holiday festival in Knife River, Minn., has grown dramatically since its launch three years ago, and word continues to spread. Norwegian National Broadcasting even covered the 2015 event on its evening news.

Heritage Marine also was featured in the December-January issue of *Professional Mariner* magazine. The article focused on the company’s fleet of rejuvenated older tugs that now service western Lake Superior.



Paul von Goertz

Mike Ojard, Heritage Marine owner, with an entourage of excited kids at Julebyen.



Brian Gauvin/Professional Mariner

Gathered around the tug *Edward H.*, are (front row) Pixie Lindberg, Edward Ojard, Patrick Ojard, and (standing) Brandon Willenarck, Bob Hom, and Mike Ojard.

## Guess first saltie

Can you guess the exact date and time the first saltie of 2016 will sail into the Port of Duluth-Superior beneath the Aerial Bridge? If so, log onto [visitduluth.com/firstship](http://visitduluth.com/firstship) and enter the First Ship Contest, cosponsored by the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and Visit Duluth. The person with the closest

guess will win a fabulous Duluth Get-away package. The contest runs through the end of March. Rules and prizes are posted online. We also have added a new twist for 2016: *weekly* winners. Go to Visit Duluth’s **Facebook** page to answer a shipping question each week and qualify for additional fun prizes.



Robert Weilton

The first saltie of 2015 – the *Kom* – arrived on April 13 at 12:12:52.

## Johnson honored as Wheat Champion

The Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers (MAWG) presented recently retired Duluth Seaway Port Authority Trade Development Director Ron Johnson with its 2015 Wheat Champion Award.



Kate Ferguson

MAWG Executive Director Dave Torgerson (left) and its President Erik Younggren (right) present Ron Johnson with the 2015 Wheat Champion Award at the annual Prairie Grains Conference in December.

The prestigious award recognizes extraordinary commitment and longevity in supporting the agriculture industry and being an outstanding spokesperson for wheat. The organization has honored just three people with this award since 1999.

Johnson retired in early January after 18 years as a tireless advocate for Port commerce and regional industries. MAWG officials said they will miss his knowledge, personality and hospitality when they bring trade groups to Duluth to see how their grain is moved onto ships in America's heartland.

## April 14 Blessing of the Port

This year, the Blessing of the Port will take place on Thurs., April 14, at the Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center in Canal Park. The ceremony, hosted by the Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers, is scheduled to begin at 5 p.m.

The annual event will include a musical tribute to mariners followed by remarks about the shipping season and a brief ceremony of blessing for all involved in the maritime industry, including a tribute to the late Rev. Norbert Mokros, local Seafarers Ministry founder.

Doors will open at 4:30 p.m. Refreshments will be provided. The service is open to the public.

For information: (218) 727-5897

## Raukar reappointed to third term on DSPA board

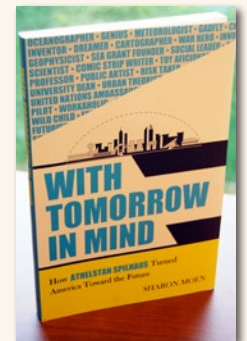
The St. Louis County Board has reappointed its longest serving Commissioner, Steve Raukar, to the Duluth Seaway Port Authority Board for a third term. First appointed in 1998, Raukar currently serves as president. Other officers and board members include: Ray Klosowski, vice president; Rick Revoir, treasurer; Chris Dahlberg, assistant treasurer; Norm Voorhees, secretary; plus Tony Sertich and Yvonne Prettner Solon.



Raukar

## Book celebrates Sea Grant visionary

The "Father of Sea Grant" is celebrated in a new book called *With Tomorrow in Mind: How Athelstan Spilhaus Turned America Toward the Future*.



The biography was written by Sharon Moen, communications coordinator at Minnesota Sea Grant. It is available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

## A portal for Great Lakes-Seaway info



Fact: Great Lakes Seaway shipping supports 227,000 jobs in the United States and Canada. This is just one fun fact at [www.greatlakesseaway.org](http://www.greatlakesseaway.org). The website is a key component of The Great Lakes Seaway Partnership, a binational initiative to enhance public understanding of marine transportation in this region of North America.

## The River Talks: Distilling essentials of the Estuary

Grab a cup of coffee, a cocktail or a flight of distilled spirits and learn about the St. Louis River Estuary. Wisconsin Sea Grant and the Lake Superior National Estuarine Research Reserve (LSNERR) are presenting a third year of science café-type evening talks about the Estuary with a new partner, Minnesota Sea Grant. The free, informal series began in October with monthly talks held at Barker's Waterfront Grille in Superior. In March, the series moved to the Vikre Distillery in Duluth and continues through May.

Check out these upcoming sessions (all begin at 7:00 p.m. at Vikre): March 30, *Smile You're on Candid Camera! Mammal Cams in the Estuary*; April 27, *Radio Tower Bay*; and May 25, *21st Avenue West Project*.

## NEW FACES & NEXT CHAPTERS

### Growth at Northern Crops Institute



Doty

Northern Crops Institute (NCI), based on the NDSU campus in Fargo, N.D., has added two staff members. **Neil C. Doty**, Ph.D., is now technical director in a consulting capacity, and **Betsy Armour** is NCI's new communications and public relations manager. Armour succeeds



Armour

**Sally Backman**, who retired last year after 25 years at NDSU, the last 17 with NCI.

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority maintains a close working relationship with NCI, hosting visiting importers from around the world each year as part of a Grain Procurement Management for Importers course. Touring the Port and its grain elevators helps participants better understand the region's agriculture industry and its role in the global marketplace.



Grain importers tour the Port of Duluth-Superior.

### Ruhl moves east to join Algoma



Ruhl

Algoma Central Corporation has hired **Gregg Ruhl** as senior vice president of engineering. Ruhl is responsible for the operations and technical teams at Algoma and the Algoma Ship Repair business unit. He oversees a fleet of nearly 40 vessels involved in Canadian and international trade, including self-unloading dry-bulk carriers, gearless dry-bulkers, product tankers and specialty cement carriers. Prior to joining Algoma, Ruhl was managing director for CN in Duluth. He also served as chairman of the Lake Carriers' Association (2012-14).

### Rand leads Duluth development efforts



Rand

**Heather Rand** is the city of Duluth's new director of business and economic development. She leads the city's efforts in that arena and serves as executive director of the Duluth Economic Development Authority (DEDA).

Rand had been regional economic developer for the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development.

### Visit Duluth welcomes new staff



Gustafson

Visit Duluth has hired a new media communications manager. **Bob Gustafson**, former public relations director for Grandma's Marathon, now manages that tourism promotion organization's social media accounts, works with travel writers and the media plus industry partners to help promote Duluth as a vacation and convention destination to national and international audiences. Gustafson succeeds **Gene Shaw**, who retired in December after more than 11 years with Visit Duluth (see page 15).

Meanwhile, Visit Duluth also welcomes



Kervina

**Kim Kervina** to its tourism promotion's team. Kervina was named sales manager following the departure of another veteran staffer. She has a background in corporate retail and previously owned a boutique in Duluth.



Nelson

**Mary Nelson**, former director of packaged travel, retired last summer after 26 years with the Visit Duluth tourism promotion team.

### Grain industry advocate signs off

Tom Ornell retired in July 2015 from the Duluth branch of Bearing Distributors, Inc. In addition to his work with the global supplier of industrial goods and services, Ornell was a longtime member and served as president of the Grain Elevator and Processing Society (GEAPS) Twin Ports Chapter.

Duluth Seaway Port Authority officials presented Ornell with a signed copy of *Pride of the Inland Seas: An Illustrated History of the Port of Duluth-Superior*. The gift recognized his service to the Port community and the leadership he provided to the local grain industry through his work with GEAPS.

## Duluth promoter to catch more fish than flack



Shaw

Longtime director of public relations for Visit Duluth, Gene Shaw, rang in the New Year as a brand new retiree. Shaw officially retired on Dec. 31, after 11 years of service.

One of his favorite responsibilities was handing PR for the AMSOIL Snocross National at Spirit Mountain—working with race promoters, teams, riders and fans from as far away as Sweden. Plans for retirement? “Setting up my home office, doing some volunteer work and going to the cabin to catch up on my fishing,” says Shaw. He also will be doing some contract work with Visit Duluth for a major conference in 2017.

## 'Retirement' looks busier for Ray Johnston



Johnston

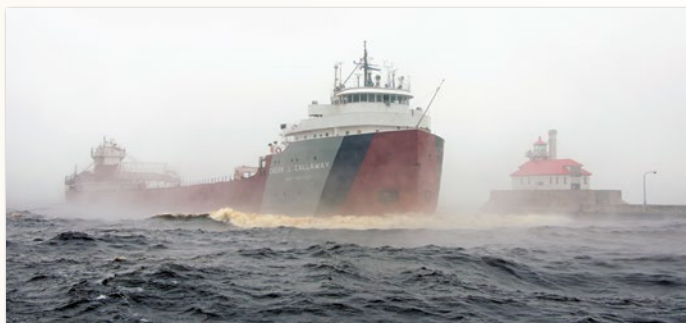
Ray Johnston has officially retired from the Chamber of Marine Commerce (CMC) in Ottawa after 16 years; three as president and the last three as special advisor to the organization. But that does not mean he plans to stop working. Johnston is still involved in various research projects and provides business consulting services for CMC. He also remains president of Green Marine Management Corporation and serves on a panel with the Council of Canadian Academies that is assessing risks of commercial marine shipping in Canadian waters. Perhaps, as he puts it, “retirement isn’t necessarily in the cards!”

## Happy Trails to MnDOT Planner



Christianson

Dave Christianson retired in October from the Minnesota Department of Transportation. He began his career at MnDOT in 2008 as freight planning manager in the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations. The Port Authority worked closely with him on heavy lift and dimensional cargo transports. His early career spanned a wide range of transportation roles including the Metropolitan Council and SRF Consulting. Along the way, Christianson attended seminary, was ordained a Lutheran minister in January 2012 and plans to continue his ministry in rural Wisconsin.



First place in the Lake Superior Photo Contest: *Cason J. Callaway Fog* by Jonathan Dyess



Second place: *Inside the Jon R.*, by Michael Pry

## Focus is on photo contest winners

What a tremendous depth of field we have in photographers who submit images for the Port Authority’s calendar contest as well as enter the annual Lake Superior Photo Contest sponsored by *Lake Superior Magazine*.

This year, nearly 260 photographers from 18 states and provinces sent in more than 1,225 images for the magazine’s 21st annual contest which included five categories: Nature, Lake/Landscape, People/Humor and Artsy/Altered plus a brand new Maritime category.

The editorial staff graciously invited the Port Authority to weigh in on choosing the best images in that category. Reprinted with permission here are the first and second place winners: 1) Jonathan Dyess of Duluth for his shot of “Cason J. Callaway Fog” taken from Duluth’s Canal Park; and 2) Michael Pry of Huntley, Ill., for “Inside the John R” shot in Bayfield, Wis. All winners and honorable mentions are featured online at [www.LakeSuperior.com](http://www.LakeSuperior.com).

## Winning wind cargo photo graces calendar

Freelance photographer Robert “Bob” Welton had a specific image in mind for his submission to the Port Authority’s 2016 Calendar Contest—a saltie loaded with wind energy components coming under the Aerial Lift Bridge.



“I’d tried to get on the calendar for years, and it eluded me,” Welton said. “This seemed like the type of image they’d want, especially with so much wind cargo handled this last shipping season.”

The winning image appears on more than 11,000 calendars, distributed in the Twin Ports, across North America and overseas.

Welton got his winning shot on July 17, 2015, when the *HHL Amur* arrived in Port, loaded with wind turbine blades from Germany bound for ALLETE Clean Energy’s Thunder Spirit project in North Dakota. The completed wind energy project has since been sold to Montana-Dakota Electric.

## Farewell to Dick Bibby, a former Marine Man of the Year

The Twin Ports lost a beloved maritime fixture with the death of Richard “Dick” Denison Bibby, 93, on Dec. 20. Longtime friend and eulogist Davis Helberg, former executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, noted Bibby’s love affair with the maritime industry dated back to his boyhood on the shores of Lake Erie and lasted well into retirement.

“Nearly every Friday, he would come to Black Woods for the weekly gathering of the ROMEOs (Retired Old Men Eating Out),” Helberg recalled. “He would arrive toting a briefcase loaded with old ship photos and maritime magazines or books. He would circulate these treasures, often with anecdotes that launched conversations lasting well into the afternoon.”

Bibby graduated in 1941 from Central High School in Detroit, Mich., and attended maritime school in New London, Conn., followed by Maritime Officer School at the Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh. He sailed the Great Lakes before World War II and the high seas during the war as a Merchant Marine for the U.S. Maritime Administration. Over a 41-year career with Hanna Mining Company, Bibby served in many capacities, including fleet personnel manager and vessel agent. It was during this career that he transferred to Duluth in 1956.

Bibby was a charter member and active in several Marine Historical Societies. He was historian of the Great Lakes Naval Association, served on the International Shipmasters’ Association, was past commander of the Duluth Chapter U. S. Power Squadrons, and acted as Harbor Club secretary for over 10 years. In 1978, the Twin Ports’ maritime community named Bibby “Marine Man of the Year.”

“Right up to the end, Dick had phenomenal recall of ships’ names as well as those of seemingly anybody and everybody who worked in the Great Lakes domestic trade during his long career,” Helberg said. “Our lives won’t be the same without him.”



Bibby with a favorite server, Lisa, at a ROMEOs lunch.

Tom Mackley

## Port location sets the scene for film noir



A film crew works on a scene for *No Blood of Mine*, A Duluth Film Noir while, in the background, the ship *Fortune* goes about her real-life work on the Duluth waterfront. The film crew was shooting at Russell Steel on the Clure Public Marine Terminal. The full-length feature film, directed by Wesley Ellenwood, is scheduled for release this summer with a Duluth premier. Visit [Facebook.com/nobloodofmine](https://www.facebook.com/nobloodofmine) for teasers.

Wesley Ellenwood



## Port Passings

**Captain Gary W. Schmidt**, 69, master of vessels on the Great Lakes for more than 40 years, died Oct. 2. Capt. Schmidt was a U.S. Navy veteran who served aboard the *USS Chicago* during the Vietnam War and the Pueblo Crisis. He started his career in tugs in Sturgeon Bay, Wis., and worked up the ranks. For the last 13 years of his career, he served as master of the tug-barge *Dorothy Ann/Pathfinder* for Interlake Steamship Co. He coauthored an award-winning autobiographical book entitled, *Real, Honest Sailing with a Great Lakes Captain*, which described mastering a large Great Lakes freighter.

**Robert Allan Parsons**, 76, of Poplar, Wis., died Nov. 18. Parsons served in the U.S. Air Force from 1960 to 1964 and was honorably discharged as an airman first class. He worked in the drafting and transportation fields for various Twin Ports firms, including Duluth Avionics, Clyde Iron, Jenos and several trucking companies. He also taught transportation management at Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College and Duluth Business University. Parsons was a lifetime member of the Duluth Superior Transportation Association and edited its monthly newsletter, *The Headlight*.

**Carl Stolpe**, 92, of Duluth, died Nov. 27. Stolpe was a graduate of Superior Central High School and graduated with honors from the U. S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn. He served in the Merchant Marine in the Pacific during World War II and was discharged in 1946. He sailed on the Great Lakes for many years before going to work for Northern Electric in Duluth.

**Richard "Dick" L. Johnson**, 88, of Foxboro, Wis., died Dec. 16. He graduated from Superior Central High School in 1945 and joined the U.S. Army Air Force. Upon his return to the Twin Ports, he helped found Four Star Construction, worked as an ironworker superintendent for Lakehead Constructors, was a Wick Buildings dealer and farmed beef. He worked on heavy lift cargoes at Lake Superior Warehousing well into his late 70s or early 80s.

**Todd Alan "Webfoot" Huberty**, 45, of Hermantown, Minn., died Dec. 22. Huberty graduated from Duluth Denfeld High School in 1990. He worked at Anderson Furniture and Seelye Plastics with a break to attain his heavy equipment operator license and put his skills to work at Miller Creek Landscaping. He returned to Seelye (on the Clure Public Marine Terminal) and worked there until his death.

**Anthony "Tony" Scott Bujold**, 60, of Duluth, died Dec. 26. Bujold graduated from Duluth Central High School in 1973. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1974 to 1978, first on the *Mackinaw* icebreaker in Michigan and then in Duluth on a buoy tender. After his honorable discharge he earned a degree in home construction and worked in his family's business before going to work as a truck driver for Fleming Foods and, most recently, Northland Foods.

**Michael Charles Meier**, 60, of Duluth, died unexpectedly at work on Dec. 30. He was employed by BNSF Railway for 41 years and was a third generation operator at the Grassy Point draw bridge.

**Rudy Lind**, 85, former Clure Public Marine Terminal superintendent, died Jan. 12, 2016, in Brule, Wis. Lind served in that capacity from 1968 to 1973 as a superintendent for Ceres, Inc., the Port Authority's managing agent at the time. A longstanding member of the International Longshoremen's Association, he returned to working out of the union until his retirement in 1988.

**Patrick H. Mockler**, 92, of Silver Bay and recently Hastings, Minn., died Jan. 14, 2016. Mockler was born in Superior and enlisted in the U. S. Navy in Oct. 1941. He was in training on Dec. 7, when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Mockler served in the Pacific on the light cruiser *USS Phoenix* through the end of World War II, participating in 24 engagements. After the war, he returned to the Lake Superior area and worked on the ore boats and Taconite Harbor construction. He and his wife moved to Silver Bay in 1955, where he worked at Reserve Mining for 30 years.

**Reverend Norbert W.W. Mokros**, 77, founding director of the Twin Ports Ministry to Seafarers, died Jan. 25 in Duluth. A full obituary will appear in our spring magazine.

**Correction:** The obituary notice for **James Francis Walsh, Sr.**, which appeared in the fall issue of *North Star Port*, inadvertently omitted his first name. We regret the error and apologize to friends and family of Mr. Walsh.

## A preface. An epilogue. A legend.

The story that follows, “*Loving the editor’s life*,” was written by Leslee LeRoux after interviewing our magazine editor, **Larry Fortner**, almost a year ago with the intent to capture his life’s story while he could tell it. Months before the interview, Larry had gotten a devastating cancer diagnosis.

He endured grueling treatments, but had rebounded so well that he thought running a look-back-at-his-life story then was premature. He still had plenty of living to do. So he edited the piece himself, and put it on a shelf to run “sometime down the road.”

Larry decided to run it in this winter edition. He died on February 17, just two weeks before we went to press—meeting his last deadline on his own terms. I’m running the story as he edited it ... in the *present* tense because, “Fort” as we all affectionately call him, will always be present here.

Larry was editor of this magazine for 23 years and was determined to finish out his current contract, which ended with this issue. You’ll recognize his fingerprint on almost every page. His wife, Jerilyn, said that calling me Feb. 9 to say he “just couldn’t finish this issue” was the hardest thing Larry had ever done.

Fort was a man of few words. When it came to editing, less was more. It was no surprise, then, that his formal obituary, sans headline, ran only two column inches. That was enough for Larry, but not for the rest of us. The *Duluth News Tribune* honored its former publisher with a front page story on the day after his death. It ran nearly 50 inches and included reminiscences from friends, family and colleagues about Fort’s dedication, grace, intellect, professionalism, competence, humility and wit. As Jerilyn said, “He loved language and any time there was an opportunity for Larry to write and edit, he wrote and edited.”

Cancer took Fort’s life, but never his spirit. A whip-cracker about deadlines, Larry refused to let cancer stand in the way of his schedules—schedules for publishing, traveling, fishing or gardening. He also refused to retreat. Fort mastered the art of living life to the fullest, even while dying. He courageously faced his terminal diagnosis, sharing medical updates and personal reflections via email during this last chapter of life. We are privileged to have known, worked with and loved this man for so many years.

*Thank you, Larry. Rest in peace. Your work here is done.* —Adele Yorde



Larry Fortner

Watching and photographing the loons at his beloved cabin was one of Larry’s favorite pastimes.

# Loving the editor’s life

By Leslee LeRoux

When Larry Fortner looks back on his working life, he remembers a lot of love.

His career started at 17, when he became the mail boy at his hometown papers, the *Indianapolis Star* and *The News*. “I was the classic gopher,” he says. “That was the best job I ever had in my life.”

Over three years in that job he learned how a newspaper functions by picking up and delivering mail to the cast of characters who crank out a daily paper. His stops ranged from the glam of the publisher’s office to the heat and grit of the stereotypers’ shop. “I loved that job,” he says. He was low man on the newspaper totem pole, but he had found his life’s calling.

After a truly miserable stint as a mail-room apprentice and journeyman, and with the encouragement of his wife and life partner, Jerilyn, he enrolled at Indiana University, majoring in journalism. He earned straight A’s his first semester. “I loved it.”

While in college, he had an internship in the sports department at *The News*, and before finishing school he got an offer he couldn’t refuse — covering the Indiana Pacers, the pro basketball team that was then in the American Basketball Association and the absolute darling of the central Indiana citizen, sports fan or not.

“It was *the* plumb beat,” Fortner says. “To this day, I still can’t get over it. I was traveling all over the country, covering this professional basketball team. I was loving the life.”

Despite his dream of someday working for *Sports Illustrated*, he was not destined to spend his life courtside. Another paper came calling, and he was offered a job at the *Boca Raton News*.

Larry found himself on a small staff of gifted reporters not afraid to take on the tough issues of an expanding South Florida in the 1970s. He covered development and growth issues as well as racial inequities that were facing a community of the very rich and the very poor.

“City Hall was packed every Monday night, there was so much going on in that town. That’s where I learned how to be a reporter. And I loved that,” he recalls.

When his editor offered a stint at in-depth reporting, he jumped at the chance to do a story on Pearl City, a small, poor black community on the wrong side of Boca’s Dixie Highway. As a white outsider to this underserved and largely ignored community, Larry was surprised to be welcomed into the true lives of its residents.

What he found were not stories of despair, but of hope. “People were well dressed for their means. (So was I, I guess.) Homes shabby on the outside were spotless inside. I wrote about the nicest people. This was not a story of crime or failure but of dignity and success. It was a good story for the paper to run. I loved doing that.”

Of all the reporting he did, and assigned, in all his years in the journalism business, the work he did on Pearl City remains among his proudest accomplishments.

By this time, Larry was in the Knight-Ridder newspaper machine, and that meant when the phone rang, you started packing your bags. He did a stint in Lexington, Ky., then got another call to head to Duluth to be the managing editor of the *News Tribune* and *Herald* newspapers in 1979.

He accepted the offer as much for his love of fishing as for the job, but soon he was hooked.

When he took the helm he inherited a high-caliber photography staff and was solid on sports with the charismatic Bruce Bennett on the desk and a capable

if quirky copy desk. A year after his arrival he was promoted to editor.

The news staff was struggling, so he began to build. He started hiring young people who went on to become some of the top names in Minnesota journalism—among them, Chris Ison, who went on to win a Pulitzer Prize in the Twin Cities, Larry Oakes, Mary Lynn Levandowski, Sam Cook. “We had a flock of superstar staffers come in, and I hired every one of them. We had an absolutely kickass staff for a number of years. Those were great years. I would not take back a minute of those years.”



Larry Fortner

Larry grew to love Duluth and his newspaper family and had hoped to become publisher of the paper. But the corner office was not in the cards, and Larry abruptly left the paper in 1988.

But he was not out of the business for long. Within months of leaving the paper, he embarked on a brand new career—running an advocacy publication for seniors.

His parents had suffered a devastating fire in which Larry’s sister, husband and their children perished. His parents eventually moved to Florida, “and did everything wrong.” Driving back home one day after visiting them in Florida, Larry told Jerilyn, “Someone needs to help them. Older people need someone

to help find their way with elder issues.”

So he started *The Senior Reporter* and for 20 years published a monthly magazine that was a guide for aging citizens and the problems facing them. Of course, Larry was ahead of his time, and his publication was cutting edge well before Baby Boom retirement culture became mainstream. He eventually sold the magazine and it lives on today, still covering elder issues in the Northland.

“That was a good gig,” he says. “I loved *The Senior Reporter*.”

And while he became a strong independent voice in the Northland publishing business, he also became editor of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority magazine, bringing his strong editing skills and love of a good story to that job as well. He is still on the job and has not missed a deadline in over 20 years. He also edits the Lake Superior Marine Museum Association’s quarterly newsletter as well as a small accounting firm’s newsletter.

He’s still trying to figure out how he went from the mail desk of two Indianapolis newspapers to the editor’s desk of two important maritime publications in Duluth. But he does know this: “I love stories about boats and the people who make them work. This long relationship with the Port Authority has put me on the path to many of those stories. It’s pretty cool stuff.”

Larry is now facing a tough assignment of his own. He has some health problems that are weighing heavily on him and his family. But he’s quick to point out that he’s still meeting deadlines.

At the same time, he loves reminiscing about all the good stories, the great writers, the people who make the life of a reporter and editor rich. Larry loved them all. And he is well-loved in return.

*Leslee LeRoux is one of the many writers fortunate to have been edited by Larry Fortner.*



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