

Duluth Seaway Port Authority

Spring 2013

NORTH STAR PORT



Mr. Ojard goes to Washington

Adolph Ojard had a message for Washington, and he delivered it in person.

Ojard is the executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority and appeared in Washington representing the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA). On April 16, on behalf of the AAPA's U.S. public port members, he testified before a subcommittee of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. He was there specifically to address the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA).

The Harbor Line
Adolph Ojard
Port Director



getting projects authorized and constructed to maintain the nation's competitive advantage in transportation efficiency, resulting in jobs and economic vitality here at home.

Background

International trade, Ojard told the representatives, accounts for more than a quarter of the nation's GDP, and WRDA is essential to U.S. competitiveness. Over 95 percent of U.S. overseas trade moves through America's seaports, providing more than 13 million high-paying, family-wage jobs.

The historic partnership between seaports and the federal government finds its roots in the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution and is the oldest and largest of all the Corps of Engineers' missions. That partnership has built much of the water-side infrastructure in use today.

WRDA established the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) in 1986 to fund federal deep-draft channel navigation operation and maintenance. The HMT is an ad valorem tax paid on the value of imports entering the U.S. and domestic cargoes. Through the early 1990s, revenues were roughly equal to expenses. But there has been a growing disparity between revenues and appropriations, with only a little over half of what's collected currently being spent for its intended purposes.

More than \$1.6 billion in revenue was collected in fiscal year 2012, and the surplus in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund has grown to more than \$7 billion. But low appropriations — not spending what has been collected —

have resulted in a system in which channels are not being maintained to their constructed depths and widths.

Looking ahead

Ports and the federal government must maintain existing infrastructure while preparing for the reality of larger ships. U.S. public ports and their private-sector partners are doing their part, funding the lion's share of port-related infrastructure improvements. According to AAPA's most recent survey, ports and their partners will invest more than \$46 billion over the next five years. However, increasingly we find that the federal partner is not upholding its part of the bargain. As a result: negative impacts on jobs, economic growth and U.S. competitiveness.

A report by the American Society of Civil Engineers last fall concluded that aging infrastructure for marine ports, inland waterways and airports threatens more than one million U.S. jobs. We cannot let that threat become a reality.

Ojard urged the committee to consider a set of six principles developed by AAPA when drafting legislation:

- Full use of all HMT revenues.
- HMT revenues first should be used for historical intended purposes, ensuring that: all federal navigation channels are maintained at their constructed depths and widths; needs are met for disposal of dredged material and the construction and maintenance of confined disposal facilities; jetties and breakwaters be properly maintained; and related studies and surveys are funded.
- AAPA is supportive of providing more equity for HMT donor ports.
- U.S. tax policy should not disadvantage U.S. ports and maritime cargo.
- The cost-share formula for maintenance and deepening should be reflective of the current cargo fleet.
- The U.S. must have a process to efficiently study and construct deep draft navigation projects.

WRDA is also an opportunity to speed up planning and project development. We can no longer take decades to respond because the nation loses jobs and economic opportunities in the process of waiting.

Ojard commended the committee for recognizing the nexus between water resources development and prosperity. "Especially in these challenging fiscal times, federal investments in port-related infrastructure are an essential, effective use of limited resources," Ojard said. "We urge you to develop and pass a Water Resources Development Act at the earliest possible time."

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Diane Hilden

Winter in the Twin Ports is a time for getting ready for the next season. That's as true for ships on tourism duty as it is for our fleet of active lakers. Here, behind the DECC, is the museum vessel *William A. Irvin* getting spiffed up for spring.

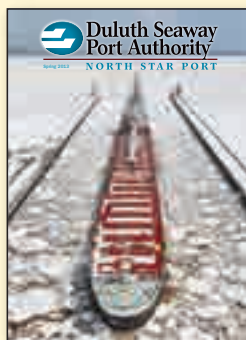
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Robert Welton



On the front:

The *Great Republic* arrives on April 13 — one of nine ships held at anchor while waiting for a path to be cleared through the ice.

On the back:

The outbound *Lee A. Tregurtha* makes her way through the virtually ice-free harbor on April 27.

Robert Welton



Inside your
NORTH STAR PORT

Spring 2013 / Volume 45, Number 1



Last season on the Lakes

4 Capt. Dennis Aho will call it a career after 50 well-drawn years on the Lakes



Revisiting history

6 Reflecting on a historic arrival and a fondly remembered life at sea



Tugs team up

9 Duluth-Superior's tug fleets were out in force to free ships from winter's grip



First saltie shatters record

11 The arrival of the *Federal Hunter* is cause for celebration



A quintessential moment

17 The world spotlight followed the Dionne Quintuplets to Superior in May 1943

On the covers

Pilot is nearly Finished with his sailing career

By Leslee LeRoux

Capt. Dennis Aho climbed the gangway of his first ship at the age of 18, and this spring will pack his sea bag for his 50th year of sailing on the Great Lakes.

Capt. Aho, a Superior native and resident, is a hawsepiper — a guy who worked his way up from the lowest rung — who has lived through the ups and downs of the Great Lakes shipping industry for half a century. Fit and trim, he is looking forward to one more year as a pilot with Western Great Lakes Pilots Association before he retires at the close of this season.

Despite coming from a long line of proud Finnish sailors, including his uncles Toivo, Waino and Eino, Capt. Aho really wanted to sail only until he earned enough money for art school. And for about a decade, he would periodically enroll at the University of Wisconsin-Superior for a semester of drawing and painting classes, then ship out to pay his tuition bills.

He was accepted at the Cooper School of Art in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1965, and before he finished his first year was offered a job as a full-time artist at American Greeting Cards. But when he did the math and compared



Dennis Aho relaxes in his Superior home shortly before shipping out for the 2013 season, his last on the Lakes.

10 years later sat for his captain's license.

Capt. Aho — today known widely as just Denny — set a new standard during his U.S. Coast Guard license examination. He drew, with colored pencils, each port and dock and added exacting details, such as cargo handlers wearing bib overalls and grain flowing from a ship's chute. The finished product was so impressive that the license examiner told him many years later that he filed a black and white copy of Capt. Aho's exam with the Coast

Guard and kept the original for himself. He considered it a work of art.

The Great Lakes shipping economy rises and falls like the levels of the Soo Locks, and the newly minted Capt. Aho found himself painting houses and teaching calligraphy classes at community college. That's when Tony Rico came calling and asked him to come piloting with Upper Great Lakes Pilots Association. He piloted salties for the next 10 years but was back as a deck officer on lakers in the downturn of the late 1980s.

When the pilots reorganized as Western Great Lakes Pilots Association in 1992, Capt. Aho was back on the bridge as a pilot, and that is where he

what he could make sailing to how much he would make as an artist while paying room, board and all the bills, he was packing his sea bag again.

About a year later, a mail boat tied up alongside his ship and delivered his draft notice. Capt. Aho's sailing career was interrupted once again as he went off to serve in the U.S. Army, including a year in combat in Vietnam.

After the war, his intentions were to return to art school, but the Lakes kept calling. He finally resigned himself to the fact he would never be an art teacher. Instead, he decided to be the best mariner he could be. He went to navigation school and wrote his officer's ticket in 1971, and just about



Denny Aho has a gift for capturing true-to-life detail, as in this drawing of the *Finland* motoring through the Duluth-Superior Harbor.

will finish his career. After 50 years of sailing, Capt. Aho is known all over the Great Lakes both as an accomplished pilot and a gifted artist. He has piloted ships across the Lakes and delivered crews and cargo safely in the worst of weather. He brings expert seamanship to the bridge of meager vessels, where a pilot does not even have a bed to sleep on, and has been treated like royalty aboard Canadian naval ships.

He will often bestow a beautifully accurate drawing of the ship he is piloting to an accommodating captain or an officer who has gone out of his way to make an American pilot comfortable on a foreign-flagged vessel. His partners will know he has piloted the ship before them when they see his artful chart work or one of his signed drawings carefully framed by a grateful crew. Quite a few of his drawings are on display in local watering holes along the shores of our inland coast, as Capt. Aho is never without his drawing pencils and can sketch out a work of art on a cocktail napkin in a matter of minutes.

He has loved his life on the Lakes, and Thunder Bay is one of his favorite ports of call. No stop for this sailor is complete without a visit to the Hoito restaurant, where Capt. Aho orders his eggs, sausage and pancakes in Finnish, of course.

When this shipping season comes to a close, Dennis Aho will unpack his sea bag and not worry about the weather come spring. But with an IQ that makes him eligible for Mensa, and an intense interest in art, history and his Finnish heritage, he and his wife, Linda, are on course for a brilliant retirement.

Leslee LeRoux is writing *Life on the Lakes*, a collection of stories about Great Lakes mariners. Excerpts from the stories are featured occasionally in this magazine. If you have a tale to tell, contact LeRoux at lfeonthelakes@gmail.com.



Robert Welton

CN is hoping to expand its storage yard near Duluth's 34th Avenue West and I-35. Locals who drive by reference it (and the adjacent ore loading facility) as simply "the ore docks."

CN hopes to expand storage area, complete upgrades

The Canadian National Railway Company has applied for permits that would allow it to expand storage capacity at its Dock 6 in Duluth. The company's proposal to the city of Duluth calls for filling 24.3 acres of St. Louis Bay — an area known as Half Moon Bay — with 288,400 cubic feet of fill to provide more space for materials storage. The project also would improve stormwater collection and management and would stabilize 4,000 feet of Dock 6 with sheetpile.

The expansion would increase CN's stockpile capacity from 2.3 million tons to 4.4 million. The project also would increase efficiency by segregating limestone and iron ore handling operations and adding a second complete conveyor system. This would allow for simultaneously discharging pellets from inbound rail cars upon arrival from Minnesota's Iron Range while reclaiming pellets from stockpiles onsite for ship-loading. Together, both factors will result in greater throughput at the existing ore dock.

The original Dock 6 storage yard was created in 1965, and CN needs more space for limestone and to segregate piles of iron ore pellets from specific plants, but mostly to handle much more ore as new and expanded mining projects come on line in Northeastern Minnesota. Adolph Ojard, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, said of CN's plans, "It's an extensive capital project, and it bodes well for the Port."

New users of the dock could be producers Essar and Magnetation. Essar is on pace to begin pellet production in 2014. Magnetation is expanding its concentrate operations and might move into open-pit mining and pellet production.

"This is a big project for us and for the future growth of not just our facility but of the mines we serve on the Iron Range," Patrick Waldron, spokesman for CN's U.S. operations, told the *Duluth News Tribune*. He added that no cost estimate has been released but agreed it will be "multiple millions of dollars."

CN also is conducting exploratory studies on the possibility of adding a second set of railroad tracks alongside its existing Spirit Lake Branch, which runs through parts of far western Duluth.

Making history on a memorable visit

Ernest "Ernie" Pickering was onboard the Ramon de Larrinaga when she sailed into Port on May 3, 1959 — the first oceangoing ship to arrive in Duluth-Superior with the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. He was kind enough recently, in an e-mail exchange with the Port Authority's P.R. manager, Adele Yorde, to tell us more about himself and his maritime career and his memories of life at sea.

I left school and started in the shipyard doing engine repairs at 15½ years of age. At 20, six months before the end of my apprenticeship, I joined the *Ramon*. The ship had docked in Hartlepool [England] with a cargo of timber from Canada on the completion of her maiden voyage. That was in the year 1954. I got married in August that year and sailed three months later on the *Ramon*. I celebrated my 21st birthday in the Persian Gulf.

My daughter Dianne was born in May 1955 while I was on my way to Australia.

I had been to the U.S. before going to Duluth. I traded between Mexico and Los Angeles, loading cotton for Japan for 12 months. I have also visited New Orleans, Tampa, Baltimore, New York and Baton Rouge. (In Baton Rouge I used the ferry boat, the old stern wheeler, to run between there and the grain wharf on the other side).

By the time we came to Duluth I had risen from 6th engineer to 3rd. If my memory serves me right there were at least 30 crew members or so on the *Ramon*.

Now to the St. Lawrence Seaway.

This part of my career was the most memorable. We docked in Montreal in the normal way and found the quayside so crowded with people who had



Ernest 'Ernie' Pickering, in his seafaring days and in retirement

come down to see the ship that they were behind a rope barrier to keep them away from the side of the ship. The voyage through the St. Lawrence was something different. It was a seven-day pilotage, something I had never experienced before. We were anchored up in one of the lakes with dense fog, and whilst the mastheads and riggings were in clear blue skies, across the lake you couldn't see a hand in front of you.

I have been through the Panama Canal a few times, where they took you into the locks attached to mules, but that can't compare to the Welland

Canal and the locks there; to lift the ship the height of the Niagara Falls is incredible.

The ship had to be slowed down well before reaching the lock gates. As the bow of the ship entered the lock gates, the displaced water got behind the ship and pushed it in at great speed. The main engine had to put in full astern, which did very little to slow the ship down, and we finished up jamming her between the lock walls.

I don't remember the entrance to Duluth and the water cannon reception, as I was down below at the engine controls bringing the ship in.

I think we were in Duluth four days or more. I know on the first night I went ashore with the 2nd and 4th engineers. We were looking for somewhere to get a drink of beer when a car we had seen cruising slowly up and down stopped beside us. Thinking that they would take us to a place where we could get



You won't find Ernie Pickering in this iconic photo, taken by Wes Harkins. Pickering, the 3rd engineer, was down below at the engine controls when the *Ramon de Larrinaga* made her historic arrival, on May 3, 1959.

to Duluth

a drink, we got in. There were three or four girls in the car.

After cruising around in the car for what seemed ages, we asked the girls when would we reach the beer parlour. They said they didn't realize that was what we wanted. They stopped the car and we got out. We asked the girls why they had picked us up, and they replied that they wanted to hear our [accents] and the way we spoke. I don't remember getting a drink that night. I wonder if those girls are still around and remember that night.

After that trip I left the *Ramon* and went on leave. On returning to sea I joined the sister ship, the *Richard de Larrinaga* as 3rd engineer and rose to be 2nd.

I left the sea in 1960 for domestic reasons. Going to sea was no good for my married life. Shortly afterward my wife and I divorced, but we remained good friends. Wanting to see more of my daughter, I never returned to sea. I returned to my old place of employment, the shipyard, until it closed down in 1968.

After working a few other jobs, I retired in 1990 following a heart attack. I am still living in Hartlepool.

Apart from my daughter, I have three granddaughters, aged 41, 36 and 28. I have two great-grandsons, aged 19 and 15, and two great-granddaughters, aged 10 and 2.

On reflection I would have liked to have stayed at sea longer, but life is like a book: You never know what's on the next page, and I've got to say I have a very loving family.

Hope you are keeping well.

Yours sincerely,

Ernie

Tall Ships® will soon descend upon Duluth

Come July 25-29, Duluth will be awash in sail, as Tall Ships® Duluth hosts its largest-ever contingent of sailing vessels. The ships bring a rare chance to catch a glimpse, step aboard and even set sail on some grand ships of yore.

Among the romantic ships will be some first-time visitors, including the SS *Sorlandet* from Norway, the schooner *Hindu* from Key West and the *Peacemaker*, built in Brazil. The *Pride of Baltimore II*, always a favorite of Tall Ships® fans, will return.

The festival in 2010 drew as many as 250,000 people to Duluth and was perhaps the biggest-ever tourist event not just in the city but in the entire region.

Ten ships already are confirmed for 2013. Among them is the 100-passenger, 118-foot *Halie and Matthew*, also new to the event this year. The event will include onboard tours, day sails and dockside viewing. A one-time opportunity will be cruising as a passenger aboard one of the ships during the Parade of Sail when the vessels arrive under the Aerial Lift Bridge. On July 29, fans will be treated to a noon start of the Tall Ships® Challenge race from Duluth to Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., the only leg of the race that will happen on Lake Superior.

Adding to the festive atmosphere will be vendors, artisans and artists, musicians and other entertainers as the festival spills over from dockside to adjacent parks and public spaces. For more: www.visitduluth.com

To order tickets by phone: **(877) 435-9849**



Seth Salzmann

The *Hindu*, out of Key West, Fla., will be a new Tall Ships® participant this year.



Courtesy Visit Duluth

Also new will be the SS *Sorlandet*, from Norway. And of course she'll bring those lovely blue skies with her.



Bruce Brown



Lee Tanula



Brett Ford

Down to the sea in shifts

Officers and crew members of Great Lakes freighters get well-deserved time off during winter layup. That's when engineers, supervisors, trades people and laborers get down and dirty with vital maintenance and repair. Here we salute some of the folks caught on the job this winter on board the *Indiana Harbor*, *American Spirit* and *John G. Munson*.

Photos by Patrick Lapinski



Joe Titus (left) and Guy Roberts



Randy Patrick



Fraser Shipyards crew reassembles an engine exhaust system after overhauls.

Icebreakers and first ships launch season

This spring, we were hard-pressed to find a single robin in the Twin Ports as we approached May — *May*, for heaven's sake! — with a harbor encased in ice and recurrent storms that bestowed upon Duluth a record for the snowiest April ever. (For your scorecard: 51 inches, clobbering the previous record of 31.6.)

But for local boatnerds, the departure of the first laker — the *Mesabi Miner* on March 20 — and the arrival of the first saltie — the *Federal Hunter*, 10 days later — were sure signs of spring in Duluth-Superior, despite the lingering snow and ice.

With local tugboats and Coast Guard cutters breaking ice nearly two feet thick in some places, the *Miner* resolutely made her way out the shipping channel and under the Aerial Lift Bridge at 9:38 a.m. on March 20. Loaded with coal from Superior Midwest Energy Terminal for a cross-lake delivery to Marquette, Mich., the *Miner* would return to Duluth that weekend to load iron ore at CN and depart for Indiana Harbor.

By the time the Soo Locks officially opened for the 2013 season on March 25, a string of lakers was lined up below the locks, led by the *Paul R. Tregurtha*, which entered the Poe Lock at 12:01 a.m. The Interlake vessel was upbound from Sturgeon Bay, Wis., to Duluth-Superior, where she would load coal and depart on the 27th.

With that, the season was well under way.

The *Roger Blough*, one of seven

(Continues on next page)



Dennis O'Hara, Northern Images Photography

In a most welcome sign of spring, the *Mesabi Miner* kicks off the season. It was March 20 when the 1,000-footer, named to honor the men and women of the Mesabi Iron Range, became our first laker out.



The north country's hardy Canada geese handle lingering winter weather by hot-footing it across the snow, or just sleeping the darn thing off.



Two-tug tangos



Breaking free from spring ice is a two-tug effort for (upper) the *Indiana Harbor* and the *Roger Blough*. Assisting the *Indiana Harbor* is a pair of stalwarts from Great Lakes Towing. Helping the *Blough* with her getaway are tugs from the Heritage Fleet.

Robert Welton photos



The *Federal Hunter* smashes the record for earliest saltie into Port.

(From previous page)

lakers that wintered in the Twin Ports, moved to the CN dock on March 23 to load iron ore for Conneaut, Ohio. She left on Sunday and ended up being the first downbounder to clear the Soo at 4:11 a.m. on opening day.

The Soo is the gateway that allows lake carriers — some 1,000 feet and more in length — to move raw ma-

terials like iron ore, coal, limestone, cement and salt between Lake Superior and Lakes Michigan, Huron and Erie. And it allows oceangoing ships to move breakbulk cargoes in and out of North America's heartland and deliver Midwestern grains to Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

First saltie makes history

When the Hong Kong-flag *Federal Hunter* sailed into the Port of Duluth-



Port Director Adolph Ojard greets *Federal Hunter* skipper Khalil Zamindar.

Jerry Bleickl

Superior just before 1 a.m. on Saturday, March 30, she secured a place in Twin Ports history as the earliest arrival on record for a full transit of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway.

The previous record for the first oceangoing vessel of the season had been set by the India-flag *LT Argosy* on April 1, 1995. Last year's first saltie, the *Arubaborg*, arrived on April 6.

The *Hunter's* 22-member crew, under the command of Khalil Zamindar, was officially welcomed by a host of

waterfront leaders in a First Ship ceremony the day after she arrived. At the event, Visit Duluth spokesperson Gene Shaw announced the winner of the annual First Ship contest, co-sponsored with the Port Authority. Rachel Kusler from Breckenridge, Minn., submitted the winning entry. She guessed

the first saltie's arrival beneath the Duluth Aerial Bridge on March 30 at 01:10:16. As it was, she was off just 17 minutes; the *Hunter's* official time was 12:53:18.

The *Hunter* departed just before midnight on April 1 with some 15,000 metric tons (16,535 short tons) of durum and spring wheat. After a stop in Thunder Bay to top off, she was bound for deliveries in France and the United Kingdom. Adding to the excitement in the Twin Ports was the arrival of a sister ship, the Cyprus-flag



Travis Chadwick

The *Federal Elbe* followed sister ship *Federal Hunter* into Port. Here, the *Elbe* takes on grain at CHS in Superior.

Federal Elbe, on *Hunter's* heels ... and another fleetmate, the *Federal Rideau*, the following weekend. After less-than-stellar grain exports last year, this early flurry was encouraging.

Upbeat outlook

The Port of Duluth-Superior moved nearly 37 million short tons of cargo during the 2012 navigation season. "We expect 2013 to wind up slightly ahead of last season's tonnage," said Adolph Ojard, Duluth Seaway Port Authority executive director. "With a strong U.S. steel market and recovery in the manufacturing sector around the Great Lakes basin, iron ore shipments should continue at a strong pace.

"Projections for coal exports are up, and the extension of production tax credits should result in wind project cargoes picking up by fall. Depending on weather patterns and global markets, we also hope to see marginal improvements in grain exports. All in all, the Port of Duluth-Superior should see increased activity."



Travis Chadwick

The *CSL Tadoussac* broke the ice for 2013 by becoming the Twin Ports' first inbound vessel. Close behind her, as the CN dock in Duluth fills early orders, is the *Arthur M. Anderson*.

Craig Middlebrook, acting administrator of the U.S. St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, was equally upbeat. "The resurgence of manufacturing in North America is fueling demand for traditional and new Seaway cargoes, having positive implications

for Great Lakes shipping. Just as the private sector is investing in new vessels and new engines, public sector investments in lock rehabilitation, port infrastructure and new navigation technologies are laying the foundation for sustained growth."

Season's firsts			
First Outbound	March 20	0938h	<i>Mesabi Miner</i>
First Inbound (From winter layup in Thunder Bay)	March 25	0438h	<i>CSL Tadoussac</i>
First In via Soo Locks	March 26	0658h	<i>Paul R. Tregurtha</i>
First Saltie (Full Seaway transit)	March 30*	0053h	<i>Federal Hunter</i>
* Earliest on record since Seaway opened in 1959			

Ice Armada

Wintry blast packs ice into harbor

Lake Superior off the Duluth Harbor was clear on April 11 and had been for several days. And then it wasn't. Powerful north and northeast winds — clocked as high as 54 mph — found every last fugitive scrap of ice on the western end of Lake Superior and drove it in chunks small and large into the passage ways.

This was not an unprecedented dirty little trick of nature; it seems to happen every few springs. This year's event put nine ships on the hook for a couple of days until tenacious local tugs, with an assist from the USCG cutter *Alder*, loosened the packed ice and cleared the way for shipping to resume.

For a good account of the action: www.duluthshippingnews.com.

The *Great Republic* approaches Port on April 13 and leaves a mushy little trail for the *American Integrity*, which followed under the Aerial Lift Bridge by 23 minutes.



Robert Welton



Nine ships (five visible here) rode out stiff winds off the Duluth entry waiting for ice to be cleared.

Carole Lent



The *Arthur M. Anderson* plows through ice after being cleared to depart.

Diane Hilden



The *Federal Welland* arrives after spending several days at anchor off the harbor.

Diane Hilden

Magnetation seeks major expansion

The minerals recovery company known as Magnetation first made its mark and profits by using a patented process to recover usable iron in concentrate form from old natural-ore tailings basins; the practice is known as “scram mining.”

From its original location near Keewatin, Magnetation has expanded or plans to expand to other old basins near Taconite, Coleraine and Calumet. All the towns are on Minnesota’s Iron Range. As reported in *BusinessNorth* in April, Magnetation’s success so far might be just the beginning. The company has leased 760 acres of tax forfeited and school trust land at another Range location. At this site, however, Magnetation would conduct conventional open-pit mining.

Clock ticking on your TWIC?

If it’s nearing time to renew your TWIC card, you’ll want to show up at the right place at the right time. The Duluth TWIC office has limited hours, so plan accordingly:

Duluth TWIC office:
Seaway Building
802 Garfield Ave., #101
(218) 727-2367
Tues. & Wed. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.



Heritage Marine’s *Helen H.* nudges the *Cason J. Callaway* into place at the CN docks early this season.

Cliffs explores new product, markets

The science of taconite mining and iron ore production could soon lead to a new product on Minnesota’s famed Iron Range. Cliffs Natural Resources officials say that they have successfully completed a full-scale test production of pellets that can be used to make direct-reduced iron. The new pellet could open new markets for Cliffs’ Minnesota iron ore. The tests were conducted at Northshore Mining in Silver Bay, Minn.

The new product could be used to make feedstock for use in electric arc furnaces, which in turn make steel. The pellets that mines on the Range have been making for decades can be used only in larger blast furnaces. Electric arc furnaces now primarily use scrap iron as feedstock.

Cliffs has been testing the process with good success at its United Taconite operation in Eveleth and Northshore Mining in Silver Bay. As for the DRI-ready pellet, “It’s not so much an if but a when,” according to Kelly Tompkins, executive vice president of legal, government affairs and sustainability and president of Cliff’s China operations.

Taconite is a hard, low-grade rock that lies deep in the ground and now serves as the primary iron ore body in Minnesota and Michigan.

Pilots elect new officers

The Western Great Lakes Pilots Association has elected Capt. Robert Krause as its new president, effective Feb. 27. Other officers for 2013 are Capt. Mark Lavalley, first vice president; Capt. Steve Vandercook, second vice president; Capt. John Swartout, secretary; and Capt. Duane Rumpca, treasurer.

Krause said in early April that his organization currently has 13 pilots and one apprentice and that nearly all pilots are at work during this season’s “very busy early start.”

His members are responsible for pilotage on Lakes Superior, Huron, Michigan and the St. Marys River. The Pilots’ main office is in Superior and is staffed by two dispatchers, an office manager and a clerical employee. A third dispatcher works out of the Pilots’ Chicago office.

When ashore (for the precious few weeks in the off season), Krause lives in Winchester, Va. He’ll also maintain a residence in Superior during the season.



Artist's rendering of Exploratorium classroom.

Aquarium plans Exploratorium

The Great Lakes Aquarium in Duluth wants to build a new education space within its existing walls. So why not an Exploratorium?

Jack LaVoy, Aquarium executive director, has put a price tag of \$265,000 on the project, and already has a check in hand for \$25,000 from Duluth-based Minnesota Power. LaVoy told the *Duluth News Tribune* that a three-year push for the balance of the fund-raising looks promising. A Minnesota Power pledge to match \$125,000 will help significantly.

LaVoy hopes to have the Exploratorium open in 2014.



The new company's staff is hard-hat trained and certified.

Nordic Underwater Services open for business

A new enterprise — Nordic Underwater Services — is going deep to meet the growing demand for experienced underwater construction and salvage services in this region. Headquartered in Superior, the veteran-owned business is locally owned, operated and staffed.

All of its divers have ACDE or ADCI cards and have completed professional commercial hard-hat diver training and certification.

The company's staff is experienced in all types of underwater construction. Nordic is owned by Chad Scott, Craig Jouppe and Alvin Jouppe. Its office and project manager is Steve Foster. For more: www.nordicuws.com | (715) 718-2040.

EPA issues final ballast water regs

On March 28 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued its final version of regulations for ships that carry ballast water.

The regulations come in what is known as the final Vessel General Permit (VGP-2) for 2013-2018. The permit regulates more than two-dozen different discharges from commercial vessels, ballast water being just one.

In a significant and welcome move, the EPA decided to exempt most existing Canadian lakers from VGP-2 ballast water treatment requirements. The EPA's earlier plan was to exempt only U.S.-flag lakers.

The new EPA permitting system requires owners of most freight-carrying vessels, including those saltwater ships coming into the Great Lakes, to adopt International Maritime Organization ballast water treatment standards for killing living organisms in the ships' on-board ballast tanks. The rules, which take effect Jan. 1, 2014, now mirror not only IMO standards but also U.S. Coast Guard regulations and the vast majority of Great Lakes' state permits.

Lighthouse Days

The Lake Superior Maritime Visitor Center in Duluth's popular Canal Park will be the headquarters for the annual Twin Ports Lighthouse Days on Aug. 7-11. The event will have a full agenda of films and tours available all four days along with many child-friendly activities. The whole thing is free.

At the heart of Lighthouse Days will be Duluth's five lighthouses, each with its own story. www.LSMMA.org

Robert Welton



This Lake Assault rescue boat, the *Brigade III*, can reach 50 mph-plus. It is operated by the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade in northern Minnesota.

Lake Assault Boats on display

Lake Assault Boats of Superior showed off two of its custom-built rescue boats on March 21 at the Port Terminal. One on display was an ice rescue boat built specifically for the St. Louis County Rescue Squad.

The second on display was *Brigade III*, a 25-foot all-aluminum rescue craft. It is capable of 50-plus mph on the water and considerably more on the ice. The boat can effortlessly transition from solid ice to water and back to ice. The boat was delivered to its new home with the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade late last year and is in service.

Lake Assault Boats is locally owned by the Capstan Corporation and operates as a division of Fraser Industries. The builder specializes in the design and construction of rugged, mission-specific boats made of all-welded aluminum.

Note: Lake Assault executives Tom Curelli and Jerry Atherton were honored in April with a Joel Labovitz Entrepreneurial Success Award in the category “Established Entrepreneur.”

Yorktown will call on Duluth in August

Duluth will be the turnaround port on Aug. 8 for a pair of 10-day cruises on the Great Lakes on the *Yorktown*. One cruise will begin in Toronto and end in Duluth. The other will cover virtually the same path in reverse.

The 257-foot liner will be on what Travel Dynamics calls its “Great Lakes Grand Discovery Tour — the Best of the Inland Seas.” The ship has also chartered for a variety of other North American cruises during its 2013 season.



Ken Newhams

The *Yorktown*, on a previous visit to the Twin Ports.

Ports highlighted on Maritime Day

National Maritime Day will be celebrated across the country on May 22 – a combined salute to merchant mariners, merchant marine veterans and the entire maritime industry.

The local event, hosted by the Propeller Club of Duluth-Superior, will feature Steven A. Fisher, executive director of the American Great Lakes Ports Association as keynote. He will discuss “Marine Delivers” and efforts to promote the Great Lakes maritime industry.



Courtesy/AAPA

Congressional leaders Janice Hahn and Ted Poe (right) were honored at the AAPA spring conference in Washington, D.C. Adolph Ojard, Duluth Seaway Port Authority executive director, presented their awards.

Port Persons of the Year

Congresswoman Janice Hahn (D-Calif.) and Congressman Ted Poe (R-Texas), co-founders of the bi-partisan PORTS Caucus, were honored with the 2013 “Port Person of the Year” award at the AAPA annual spring conference in Washington, D.C., in March. “In selecting these two advocates for this award, we’re recognizing a pair of national leaders who understand the critical importance of our nation’s ports,” said Adolph Ojard, AAPA U.S. Delegation Chair and executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority.

Stewart named to EPA advisory board

Richard Stewart, Ph.D., co-director of the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute at UWS, has been named to the Great Lakes Advisory Board of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to support implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

Port Passings

Capt. **Edward Philip Fitch IV** of Sandusky, Ohio, died Feb. 22, 2013. He worked for 41 years with Bethlehem Steel on Great Lakes vessels, including stints as captain of the *Stewart J. Cort* and *Burns Harbor*. He was a U.S. Army veteran and a member of the International Shipmasters Association.

Donald William Johnson, 83, Duluth, died on April 2, 2013. He was an Army veteran of the Korean War and served in Japan. He sailed the Great Lakes for 17 years and then came ashore to be with his wife and children. He became a marine surveyor with the American Bureau of Shipping and served in that capacity for 27 years.

Mr. Johnson also did volunteer work for many years and was a member of the Shriners, Masonic Temple and Euclid Lodge. He was an active member of the Harbor Club.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Betty Ann Johnson (Martin); daughter Janice (John) Royer; son, Richard (Jodie); sister-in-law, Margaret Johnson; and his grandchildren, great-grandchild and extended family.

Fred C. Lewis, 93, a banking pioneer and business leader in Duluth for decades, died on April 10, 2013. Mr. Lewis started in the family banking business at Park State Bank in 1945. He purchased Northwestern Bank of Commerce in 1951. Throughout the late 1950s and 1960s, he grew the North Shore Company to include individually chartered banks in Lakeside, Woodland and Hermantown.

In 1961, Mr. Lewis purchased and moved the flagship bank and built new buildings on the corners of Second

Sertich named to Port Authority Board

Tony Sertich has been appointed to the Duluth Seaway Port Authority by Gov. Mark Dayton for a six-year term, effective Feb. 25. He replaces Lowell Hellervik, who had served on the board since 2007.

Sertich, a former DFL legislator from Chisholm, Minn., is a fourth-generation Iron Ranger. He currently is serving as commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB), a position to which he was appointed by the governor in 2011.

Sertich served in the Minnesota House of Representatives for more than a decade and was elected house majority leader in 2006, the youngest in Minnesota history.



Tony Sertich

Avenue West and Superior Street as well as on the avenue at First Street. Today his enterprise operates under the name of North Shore Bank of Commerce and continues to be owned and managed by the Lewis family. He was named a "Minnesota Banking Pioneer" by the state's banking association.

His vision for commerce led him to work for the expansion of the Duluth port and the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway. Mr. Lewis served as a member of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority board from 1956 to 1962.

Mr. Lewis is survived by his wife of 64 years, Mary Holmes Lewis; sons Donald (Sally) of Columbus, Ohio, and Douglas (Jennifer) of Duluth; daughters Dale of Duluth and Anne (Peter Nord) of Baltimore, Md.; seven grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Sertich also is business manager of a family enterprise on the Iron Range. Sertich received a B.A. degree with a double major in political science and theater arts from Hamline University. He and his wife live in Chisholm.

Board elects officers

At its annual meeting on March 21, the Duluth Seaway Port Authority Board elected officers for fiscal year 2014. These commissioners were re-elected to their posts: **Steve Raukar**, president; **Ray Klosowski**, vice president and **Rick Revoir**, assistant treasurer.

Commissioners **Cal Larson** and **Norm Voorhees** were elected treasurer and secretary, respectively. Together with fellow board members **Chris Dahlberg** of Duluth and **Tony Sertich** of Chisholm, the seven commissioners oversee the Port Authority's financial and organizational affairs.

Corrections

Three corrections from *North Star Port*, Winter 2012-13:

This photo, which ran on Page 19, should have been credited to Enis Ozturk. In the story on that



same page, the ship should have been described as the Turkish-flag *Duden*.

A photo caption on Page 9 of that issue misspelled the name of the *Stewart J. Cort*.

Five girls, five ships, one famous moment

By Jerry Sandvick

Five girls, the most famous quintuplets in history, came to Superior in an early stage of World War II to spotlight the launch of five ships, on the same day, from the same shipyard. Their being here was the result of a masterstroke of planning, ship-building and public relations and, for one day in May 1943, the city of Superior, Wisconsin, was the center of national attention.

For more than a year before the U.S. entered the war, it had been clear that ships were in desperately short supply and, in 1940, the U.S. Maritime Commission began the Emergency Shipbuilding Program. The program gave large government subsidies to shipyards on the coasts and the Great Lakes to expand and begin building a variety of ships. The larger ships would be built by coastal yards and the smaller ones inland. Nonetheless the smaller cargo ships were substantial, ranging in lengths to 338 feet.

The Twin Ports had five yards at work by 1942, and the largest was Walter Butler's in Superior, about where the Blatnik Bridge would later cross the bay. The Walter Butler company was a large, well established St. Paul construction firm that had gotten the Maritime Commission's nod

to construct a yard and build a variety of ships. Robert Butler, son of the company's founder, would be Butler Shipbuilding's president and driving force.

By mid-1942 Butler was well into the construction of its first ships, vessels that were designated N3-S-1A.



This photo montage was prepared by the Walter Butler Shipbuilders to sum up the day of the five launches.

These were 258-footers with a 42-foot beam, coal-fired reciprocating steam power and 2,900 deadweight tons. They were based on old, reliable technology and designed to be built quickly. Two of these ships, the *Justin Doane* and the *Tully Crosby*, were ready for launching at the same time in late 1942.

The launching of any ship occasioned a public celebration. Robert Butler clearly had a finely tuned sense of public relations, so it was no coincidence that the two ships would hit the water in a double launch on Armistice Day — November 11, 1942. The event drew much local press coverage, and the shipyard's in-house news maga-

zine, *Butler News and Views*, reported that some 5,000 people had gathered to witness the launchings.

The Butler schedule had several N3s ready for launching in the spring of 1943; with some tweaking another multiple launch might be possible. These many years later we cannot be certain of the exact decision-making process, but it is likely that Robert Butler or a top shipyard executive determined that if two ships could draw 5,000 spectators, four or five launchings would be even better.

By long-standing nautical tradition, females christen ships, and there is no age requirement. In Canada, there were five nine-year-old girls who already were world famous, and if they could sponsor a five-ship launch in a single day, it would be a public-relations event to end all.

The girls were the Dionne Quintuplets, born 1934 in Callander, Ontario, a town near the Ontario-Quebec border. Father Oliva-Edouard and mother Elzire Dionne were a French Canadian family, and the daughters had become famous as the only known quintos to have survived infancy. (The probability of human quintos born by natural conception is about 1 in 54

(Quintuplets continues on next page)

Superior Public Library and Lake Superior Maritime Archives, UWS

(Quintuplets, from previous page)

million.) The girls gave Butler a patriotic promotional opportunity *par excellence*: Five celebrated and adorable girls from our neighbor to the north would sponsor five American-built ships that were destined for Great Britain and the war effort.

The February 1943 Butler newsletter announced that the historic launching would be on May 9 and that American and Canadian governmental approvals were in place. The Quints would arrive in Superior on a special train car, and thousands were expected to attend the event with millions listening to the live radio broadcast.

As the date neared, the travel of the family to Superior was diligently reported in newspapers far and wide. It was their first trip outside Canada. How would the girls react? Would they sing *God Bless America* or the

Twin Ports yards built nearly 200 WWII ships

The five steam freighters of the Quint Fleet were among 26 N-3s produced in Twin Ports shipyards during the WWII years. In all, the yards built 191 steel ships in several classes, among them 51 338-foot C1-M-AVI coastal freighters, 39 180-foot Coast Guard buoy tenders (the famed “180s,” among them the *Sundew*), 20 armed frigates and dozens of other working craft.

Nearly 15,000 men and women labored in the seven yards and innumerable support plants to keep the emergency shipbuilding effort on schedule.

— From a Summer 1993 *North Star Port* article by C.P. Labadie

Star Spangled Banner? Would they sing in English or in French? The *Montreal Gazette* reported that they were “wide eyed and too excited for sleep, scampering from window to window and chattering about each new sight” on their trip.

Theirs was a large family. The *St. Petersburg Independent* reported that in addition to the Quints and their parents, four siblings, age 5 to 14, were also along on the train. Three other children remained at home. The oldest of them, 16-year-old Ernest, had to stay at home and take care of Darkie

and white blouses. Red shoes and hats completed their attire, and they sang *God Bless America* in English, which was broadcast nationally and captured on Movietone News. Something like 20,000 spectators watched from special bleachers, and the shipyard had extra first aid stations, toilets, drinking fountains and traffic control.

The list of dignitaries included governors, mayors and members of Congress from Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as Canadian officials, U.S. Maritime Commission members and naval officers.

and Teddie. It would not be right, the *Duluth Herald* solemnly stated, “to leave these two beautiful Belgian farm horses in the care of others just to be an honored guest at a government celebration.”

May 9 was cool, and the Quints put on red coats over their gray dresses



Five N3 cargo vessels, lined up and waiting for the arrival of the world's five most famous little girls. Butler Shipbuilders had readied two launch crews, each with 25 riggers to ride the ships down and 100 sledgemen to knock away the wooden blocks and allow the ships to slide down the ways.

The five ships, all quite imposing N3 cargo vessels, were lined up and ready. The yard had two launch crews, each with 25 riggers to ride the ships down and 100 sledgemen to knock away the wooden blocks and allow the ships to slide down the ways. The proceedings began at 2 p.m. and took only two and a half hours to launch all five. Ships are customarily launched with a bottle of Champagne smashed on the bow, but that was thought unseemly for nine-year-olds and so bottles filled with Niagara Falls water were substituted.

The Dionne girls did their work in alphabetical order: Annette launched the *Asa Eldridge*, Cecile the *Watson Ferris*, Emelie the *Bailey Foster*, Marie the *Gurden Gates* and Yvonne the *Moses Gay*. (The ships were named after early American sea captains.) All five launchings went off without a hitch, each accompanied by loud cheers and whistles blasting.

Oliva Dionne declared himself a proud papa, Elzire said it was the best Mother's Day she had ever had and Admiral Emory Land, chairman of the Maritime Commission, thought that



Superior Public Library

Having arrived in Superior on a special train from Canada, the Dionne girls were lined up to greet a crew of shipbuilders at the Butler yard.

with such goings on "Hitler doesn't have a snowball's chance." With that, the Dionne family boarded their special train and went home.

The five ships of the Quint Fleet went into British service for the rest of the war and at least three worked for many years

after under the flags of foreign shipping companies. Perhaps the best summary came from the Butler Shipyard news magazine's May 1943 issue that said, "All in all, it was a swell show."

Jerry Sandvick is a history professor emeritus and president, Lake Superior Marine Museum Association.

Wartime women shipbuilders

I Gave My Heart to Know This, a novel by Minnesota native Ellen Baker, centers on the women who worked in the shipyards of the Twin Ports during World War II.

Just like the men of the shipyards, women welders worked 10 to 12 hours a day in all weather in heavy, ill-fitting clothes, welding rivets and seams on hulls and steel decks.

Baker was drawn to the topic years ago while working as a curator at the Richard I. Bong Veterans Historical Center in Superior. "I was doing an exhibit on World War II home front activities and discovered photos of women in welding garb," Baker said.



Douglas County Historical Society

Among those in this wartime photo from the Butler shipyard: Dorothy Gonchorik, front row, first woman far left; Helen Anderson Jones, front row, third from left; and Ruth Jurvelin Laakso (mother of Kathy Laakso, current director of the Douglas County Historical Society), third row, far right (face just about hidden).



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