

LAUNCH OF IRONBOAT | MODERNIZED SPAR | FIRST SHIP | SEASON OPENS



# NORTH STAR PORT

SPRING 2022



A PUBLICATION OF THE



**Duluth Seaway  
Port Authority**

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# THE HARBOR LINE

On a November-like day in late April, members of the Duluth Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gathered near ground zero of MnDOT's Twin Ports Interchange construction project to unveil the ASCE 2022 Minnesota infrastructure report card. Perhaps it was appropriate that the skies darkened, the winds crescendoed, and rain fell as the ceremony drew to a close. While the report card isn't quite apocalyptic, it certainly doesn't declare "happy days are here again."

ASCE considered 10 infrastructure categories in awarding the state an overall grade of C. Two categories warranted scores in the B range (aviation, public parks), seven were in the "mediocre" C range (including bridges, energy and ports), with roads, earning a D+, wearing the dunce cap. For context, B means "good, adequate for now," C means "mediocre, requires attention," and D equates to "poor, at risk."

The good news: Minnesota's overall grade hasn't dropped since the last report card, issued in 2018. However, this could be the result of the addition of a new teacher's pet of a category, public parks, which scored a B-, raising Minnesota's spot on the curve. In the spirit of full parental disclosure, ports dropped from C to C-. ASCE's national infrastructure grade, last awarded in 2021, was a C-, with ports earning a B-. The national framework considered 17 infrastructure categories, including rail.

Why should we care? As the ASCE summarizes: "infrastructure includes fundamental facilities and systems necessary for Minnesota's economy to function." The link is clear: modern, maintained and resilient infrastructure is necessary for a successful economy and a thriving society. Our transportation infrastructure links our communities to each other and our industries to global markets while our utility infrastructure ensures reliable supply of and delivery systems for energy and clean water. Yet, most of our nation's infrastructure systems were built in the middle of the last century. Our systems are fraying and we are not keeping up with the Joneses.

The World Economic Forum's 2019 Global Ranking of Economic Competitiveness ranks the United States

only 13th in infrastructure competitiveness (accounting for transportation and utility infrastructure). We spend less on infrastructure compared to our peer nations as well. The U.S. (0.55 percent) lags behind China (5.5 percent), Norway (1.49 percent), Japan (0.94 percent), the U.K. (0.91 percent), France (0.89 percent) and Germany (0.72 percent) in terms of annual infrastructure investment as a percentage of GDP. Furthermore, it is widely acknowledged that large infrastructure projects are more expensive in this country than in our peer countries. For those who have lived the process, two important contributors are: a) lengthy, overlapping and inefficient permitting processes; and b) the expansion, since the 1970s, of policy tools that provide property owners and stakeholders opportunity to object to and litigate projects, causing delays, which translate to mounting costs. While these administrative policy tools were well intentioned, use of them has gotten out of hand, becoming a weaponized NIMBYism.

Yes, we cheer the advent of the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure and Jobs Act and its promised five-year \$550 billion new federal investment in America's roads, bridges, ports and waterways, water and energy infrastructure. It's fantastic that our polarized government was able to prioritize infrastructure and come together to structure this five-year spend, but more is needed. Specifically, we need dedicated action, planning and funding that extends *beyond* five years. We need to acknowledge the importance of infrastructure to the nation's sustainability and economic health. We need to immediately work on identifying a sustainable source of infrastructure funding into the future. Finally, we need to clean up our project delivery and administrative processes. Only then will ASCE be able to deliver state and national report cards worthy of pride.



Deb DeLuca, Port Director



Seven lake freighters sit mired in Lake Superior's Whitefish Bay during an ice-impeded start to the 2022 shipping season.

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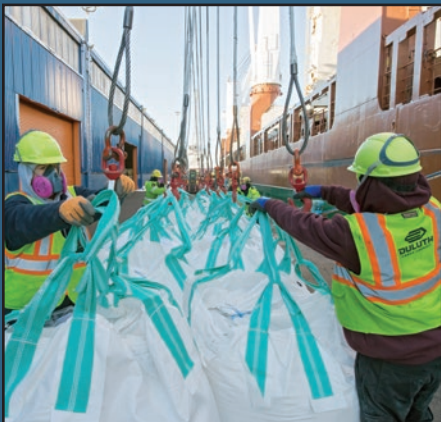
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**About North Star Port**

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority produces this quarterly magazine. Jayson Hron is the publisher. Editorial assistance provided by Julie Zenner. Graphic design by Erin Makela.

Bob Welton



Duluth Cargo Connect stevedores offload bagged minerals from the *Hudsongracht* on April 27, 2022, at the Clure Public Marine Terminal. *Hudsongracht* was the season's first oceangoing general cargo vessel to call at the Port of Duluth-Superior.

Gus Schauer



**On the front:**

*Finnborg* sails into the Port of Duluth-Superior. The Dutch-flagged vessel loaded sugar beet pulp pellets.

**On the back:**

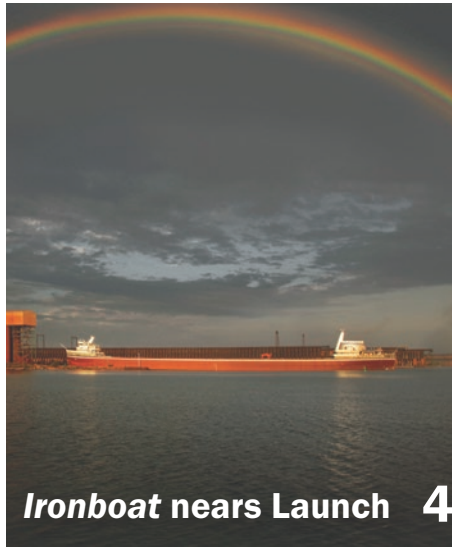
Passing near the Great Lakes Aquarium, the 140-foot U.S. Coast Guard icebreaking tug *Neah Bay* sails in late March through the Duluth inner harbor. *Neah Bay* was the first vessel to pass under Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge this season.

Jane Herrick



Inside your  
**NORTH STAR PORT**

Spring 2022 / Volume 55, Number 2



**Ironboat nears Launch 4**



**Modernized Spar Debuts 8**



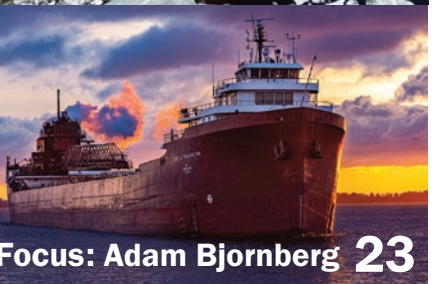
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**On the covers**

Printed on 10% post-consumer waste paper.



# “Ironboat” nears launch

## Book loaded with photos and history of classic lakers

BY JULIE ZENNER

There are chance encounters in every person’s life that change its trajectory and prompt unexpected moves in new directions. Great Lakes photojournalist Chris Winters can pinpoint one such moment in the fall of 2000, as he was “idling home” to Milwaukee from the “hard-luck port” of Superior, Wisconsin.

A rambler of sorts, then in his late 20s, Winters sauntered into a store called Allouez Antiques, not looking for anything in particular. There he chanced upon a black-and-white photograph of the lake steamer *Wilfred Sykes* as it cleared the Sleeping Giant rock formation at Thunder Cape on the north shore of Lake Superior. The snapshot image stirred Winters’ longtime fascination with lake lore and the mighty vessels that traverse the Great Lakes. His \$10 purchase turned out to be priceless.

“The photo captured an elusive feeling I’d been chasing upstream, against the current of my imagination for as long as I could remember,” writes Winters in a soon-to-be-published book, called “Ironboat,” which chronicles the toils and travels of the *Wilfred Sykes* and her fleetmate the *Edward L. Ryerson*. “Galvanized by this magic bean of a snapshot, I turned to my own camera: a second-hand Hasselblad 500 C/M, battered and leaky, fully mechanical. It was the sort of camera Apollo astronauts took to the moon.”

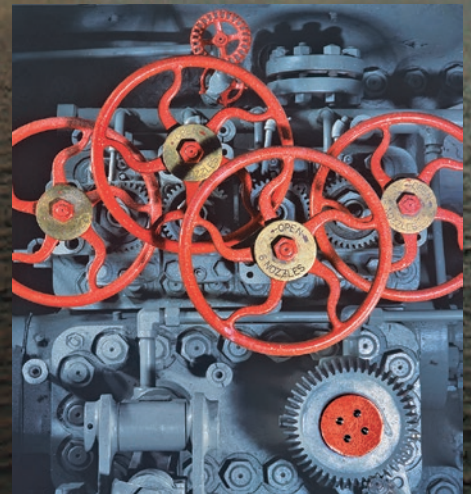
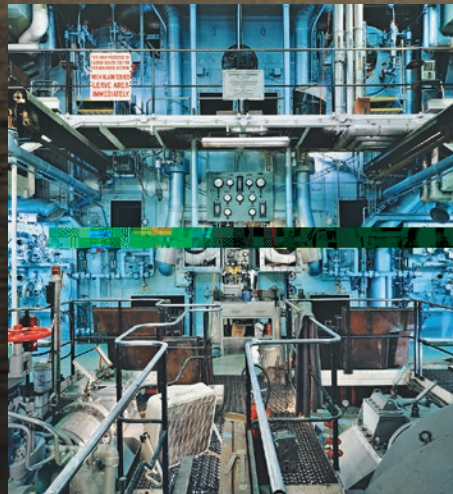
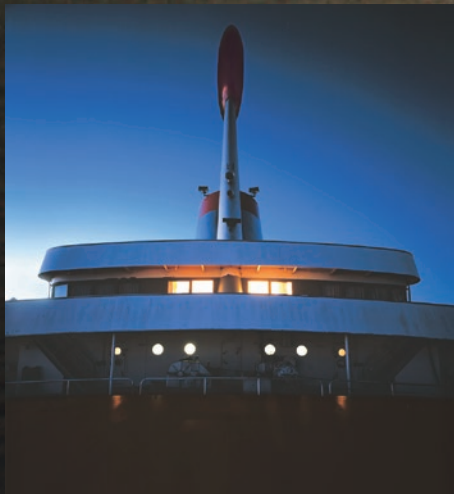
Back home, Winters found a job as an apprentice with a local commercial photographer. In his spare time, he volunteered to document construction of the *Denis*

*Sullivan*, a replica of a 19th-century, three-masted Great Lakes schooner being built in Milwaukee. He learned to shoot and edit photos using emerging digital technology. This experience set him on a course to become an author, historian and photojournalist, specializing in the Great Lakes and some of its most unique vessels and stories.

“Ironboat” will be Winters’ fourth book. Others include “Schooner Days: Wisconsin’s Flagship and the Rebirth of Discovery World,” “Centennial: Steaming through the American Century,” and “The Legend Lives On: S.S. Edmund Fitzgerald,” which soon will be out in a second edition. Winters has also chronicled such historic maritime passages as the final season of the USCGC *Mackinaw* prior to its decommissioning in June 2006, and more recently, the construction of the *Mark W. Barker*, the first bulk carrier built for Great Lakes service in nearly 40 years.

The seeds for “Ironboat” were planted back in 2000 with the chance discovery of the *Wilfred Sykes* photo. They were cultivated the following year when Winters began photographing the *Edward L. Ryerson*, which sat idled in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, from December 1998 to June 2006. The vessel then briefly returned to service before entering long-term layup at Fraser Shipyards in Superior, where it remains to this day.

“I began making photos for this book in April of 2001 aboard the *Edward L. Ryerson*; (during) a low ebb for lake shipping,” writes Winters, recalling the experience of



shooting the laid-up vessel. “Emptied of cargo and water ballast, when the wind came up, the boat’s high profile placed a strain on the deadwires making her fast to the dock. Down in the holds or engine room, the throttled noises produced by the hull bucking against those mooring cables were eerily human ... or alive, anyway. It was like working inside a tethered animal, tired of being held at the wall.”

For the next two decades, Winters’ “Ironboat” project steamed ahead in fits and starts, evolving to tell the story of two vessels—fleetmates that bookended a generation of classic lakeboat design and construction that spanned from the end of World War II to the early 1970s, when the *Stewart J. Cort* ushered in the era of thousand-footers. Visitors to the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, over the past year got a sneak peek of what the book will offer with a gallery exhibit entitled *Ironboat: Photographs* by Christopher Winters (see sidebar story on pg. 7).

Winters draws upon eerie images snapped aboard the idled *Edward L. Ryerson* and candid action shots taken during voyages on both the *Wilfred Sykes* and the *Edward L. Ryerson* after it returned to service in August 2006. Central Marine Logistics of Griffith, Indiana, owns the two vessels and is sponsoring the book project. The company has given Winters unprecedented access to historic photos, log books, promotional materials and the boats themselves to develop a photo narrative that illustrates their significance in Great Lakes history.

The *Wilfred Sykes*, still an occasional visitor to the Port of Duluth-Superior truly was “The Ship of Tomorrow” when Inland Steel Company commissioned the American Shipbuilding Company to build her in 1948. Boatnerd.com notes that she was the first new American-built Great Lakes vessel constructed after World War II and the largest vessel on the lakes at the time of her launch. She also was the first steamship built to burn “Bunker C” heavy oil for fuel instead of coal, the first vessel built with a 70-foot beam, and the first laker capable of carrying in excess of 20,000 tons—setting ore cargo records for her first three years of operation.

“Inland Steel was a progressive firm, going all the way back to its earliest days in the late 19th Century,” Winters said. “They embraced technological change and were big believers in plowing corporate profits back into the firm’s steelmaking assets and people. Following the Allied victory in World War II, America stood astride the globe, unrivaled in its peacetime prosperity and untouched by the tide of devastation that affected every other major economy. Riding high on the crest of that postwar boom, Inland commissioned a lake carrier that was not only trendsetting and functional, but beautiful.”

More than 15,000 people packed the American Shipbuilding Company yard on July 11, 1949, to celebrate the launch. The excitement was contagious. Overflow crowds spilled out along the banks of the Black River as folks strained to get a look.

**IRONBOAT** continued on Page 6



The *Wilfred Sykes* was impressive inside and out. As flagship of the fleet, she served as an unofficial corporate yacht as well as a powerhouse ore carrier. Inland Steel invested significant money on well-appointed guest accommodations, and Winters has uncovered many vintage photos of VIPs dining, lounging and playing games as they traveled the Great Lakes aboard the mighty vessel. Over a span of 15 years, Winters himself spent months sailing aboard the *Wilfred Sykes*, from spring fit-out in March to winter lay-up in January.

The second half of “Ironboat” turns to the *Edward L. Ryerson*. Similar in design and construction to the *Wilfred Sykes* but somewhat larger and more luxurious, the *Edward L. Ryerson* was the last steam-powered freighter built on the Great Lakes and the last U.S. laker built that was not a self-unloader. The 730-foot-long, 75-foot-wide Seawaymax vessel left its berth at the Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company on July 28, 1960. At the time, she was the largest bulk carrier ever built on the Great Lakes—so big she almost didn’t make it out of the shipyard.

An article written in 2020 by Emily Shedal for USA Today Network-Wisconsin quotes a *Manitowoc Herald Times* report from the day the *Edward L. Ryerson* left the shipyard. It describes maneuvering the boat through a maze of bridges and out to the lake as ‘like building a cruiser in the basement and then engineering it through a door too small for its shortest dimension.’

“The fleet office at Inland went to Manitowoc Shipbuilding and said, ‘Build us the finest ore boat you can, a ‘streamlined workhorse,’” Winters said. “Like the *Sykes*, from the waterline up, her appearance was styled by a nationally renowned industrial designer and her

architecture included a number of functional attributes that made her unique, including the weight-saving aluminum covers on her then-unprecedented 20-foot-wide hatches and a specialized ballast tank configuration that expedited the loading and unloading of iron ore. In appearance, the boat is absolutely one of a kind.”

The *Edward L. Ryerson* is a unique beauty among lake freighters with graceful lines, a flared bow, large pilothouse, cruiser stern and a signature stainless steel funnel. She cuts a fine figure even today, languishing in long-term layup in Superior—a towering reminder of days gone by and a fan favorite of boatnerds and shutterbugs.

“That classic laker configuration with the pilothouse at the forward end and no self-unloading gear cluttering her profile is a thing of the past,” Winters said. “The larger story is that change is inevitable, and it is often quite healthy. But there are some changes that hit harder than others. Sometimes a disappearance represents something really exceptional that may never be reclaimed.”

Winters had hoped to release “Ironboat” in 2021, but pandemic funding and production challenges and demand for a second edition of *The Legend Lives On* have delayed publication, likely to spring 2023. He sees a silver lining in the delays, another pivotal opportunity to adjust his course.

“The universe provided a little time I didn’t ask for, but that time allowed me to drill down further on archival research; what I discovered will make the book better, more interesting and more complete,” Winters said. “That said, I also know when to call a thing finished. This project has always been my pet, and I’m excited to share it.”





# Museum preserves Wisconsin's maritime history

BY JULIE ZENNER

There's a long, proud tradition of boatbuilding on the Great Lakes, from the dugout canoes of indigenous people to tall masted schooners, bulk freighters and World War II submarines. The Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc preserves, interprets and teaches the maritime history of Wisconsin and its waters, including the upper Great Lakes.

A recent gallery exhibit called *Ironboat: Photographs* by Christopher Winters was a natural fit for the facility and its visitors. One of the vessels featured was built just inland from the museum's location at the mouth of the Manitowoc River. The exhibit included the museum's archival footage of the *Edward L. Ryerson's* launch.

"The *Ironboat* exhibit was extra special to us because the *Edward L. Ryerson* was the last big bulk freighter launched out of Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company," said Cathy Green, executive director, Wisconsin Maritime Museum. "It is a really important chapter in the story we are here to tell."

Founded in 1970 as the Manitowoc Submarine Memorial Association, the facility has grown into one of the largest maritime museums in the Midwest. Its centerpiece exhibit

is the USS *Cobia*, a Gato-class submarine, much like the 28 World War II submarines built at Manitowoc Shipbuilding Company during the war. The 312-foot submarine is a major draw for museum visitors, tour groups and overnight guests (as an Airbnb).

"*Cobia* is a working submarine in many ways, even though she never leaves the dock," Green said. "Two of her four diesel engines still run, electrical systems on board still operate, and she has the oldest working radar anywhere in country and possibly the world."

Another draw is the museum's designation as state repository for all materials recovered from shipwrecks around Wisconsin's waters. Museum staff work with the State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Historical Society to preserve and interpret artifacts from shipwrecks in Lake Superior and Lake Michigan.

"We have an incredible collection of artifacts, photographs and material culture of Wisconsin's maritime history," Green said. "Our role is to preserve, collect, and interpret those things people have left behind to tell their stories."

"How we tell those stories is a great challenge but one we are excited to continue," said Kevin Cullen, deputy director and chief curator, noting that the region's maritime history predates European contact by thousands of years, and the earliest Great Lakes mariners paddled dugout canoes. "In many parts of the Great Lakes, that is sort of overshadowed by the big boats."

Many of the museum's resources are available online. It maintains and curates the Gerald C. Metzler Great Lakes Vessel Database, a comprehensive index of Great Lakes ships from the 18th and 19th centuries, and is working to increase online access to photographs, research materials and information about items in its expansive collections.

To learn more about the Wisconsin Maritime Museum, please visit [www.wisconsinmaritime.org](http://www.wisconsinmaritime.org).



# MODERNIZED SPAR DEBUTS IN DULUTH



Photos by Jayson Hron

BY JAYSON HRON

When the buoy tender *Alder* departed its longtime home port last summer, the United States Coast Guard promised to send interim icebreaking assets to the Port of Duluth-Superior in support of the 2022 spring breakout. USCG vessels *Hollyhock* and *Neah Bay* fulfilled that promise, locking through prior to the Soo Locks' official opening and ramming their way past an ice shelf into the Duluth ship canal on March 23, 2022.

Combining with commercial tugboat operators, the USCG vessels quickly set to work freeing ships that wintered in Duluth-Superior, then fracturing ice throughout the harbor and up the North Shore. They gained an ally in the ice fight March 30, when USCGC *Spar* arrived in her new home port, but some final maintenance work limited her initial availability for icebreaking duty.

A 225-foot Juniper-class *Alder* sister ship, *Spar* sailed into the Twin Ports amidst a fitting Duluth welcome: a school-canceling late-spring snowstorm. It was nothing new for *Spar*, which spent 20 years prowling the Alaskan gulf and brisk Bering Sea before sailing off to Baltimore, Maryland, for a midlife update. She left the Charm City with an impressive list of refreshments, some 178 work items in all, which will be put to good use in her new deployment on the Great Lakes. Among them:

- A new crane for lifting and lowering aids to navigation, icebreaking weights, or anything else the



vessel may need to load or unload.

- A new dual point davit (which raises and lowers the vessel's small aids-to-navigation boat into and out of the water). This new davit has an increased working load limit, allowing all personnel to board the small boat while it's still in the cradle. Previously, only two people could board in the cradle; the rest had to climb aboard as part of a secondary transfer maneuver.

- New bow and stern thrusters.
- Upgraded HVAC system.
- Updated grey water system.
- Upgraded anchor windless control system, replacing the console formerly fixed to the vessel's forecandle with a wired chest pack, so the operator can have a better view of the operation.
- New paint, applied after a full sandblasting.



When *Spar* arrived in Duluth, she carried with her from Baltimore a crew of seasoned Great Lakes guardians most recently stationed in the Twin Ports, so it was a homecoming in more ways than one. Crew members and their families eagerly reunited alongside the vessel, embracing in the heavy, wet snow after almost three months apart, then climbing aboard for tours of the former Aleutian keeper, now Superior cutter.

From her new home port, the second act for *Spar* will include managing Lake Superior's aids to navigation (buoys) and assisting with icebreaking duties in and around Duluth-Superior. The 3,100-horsepower vessel is capable of maintaining 15 knots on open seas, with an unrefueled range of nearly 6,000 miles at 12 knots. The cutter is named after the former USCG Women's Reserves, nicknamed the SPARs by Captain Dorothy Stratton, first female officer of the USCG. She created the moniker as a play on the Latin and English translations of the Coast Guard motto: Semper Paratus, and its meaning—always ready.

It's the second USCG vessel of this name, and both have a connection with Duluth. Learn more about the original *Spar* below in the next story of *North Star Port* magazine. ⚓



## A Woman's Touch: Twin Ports 'welderettes' helped build original *Spar*

BY PATRICK LAPINSKI, WITH SELECT MATERIAL SOURCED FROM THE HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

When the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Spar* sailed into its new home port of Duluth earlier this spring, it followed a long-standing Coast Guard tradition of service and dedication to the safety and wellbeing of mariners in the Twin Ports and around the globe. This particular *Spar*, one of a series of buoy tenders built in 1999-2000 in Marinette, Wisconsin, is no stranger to search and rescue, seas larger than those Lake Superior can generate, and tending buoys. Its recent arrival in the Port of Duluth-Superior calls to mind the original *Spar* (WLB-403) built in Duluth in 1943.

Around the Twin Ports, multiple shipyards produced a variety of ships for government service during World War II. Notably, Duluth's Marine Iron and Shipbuilding built several classes of buoy tenders (Cactus, Mesquite, and Iris), known as the 180s (a reference to their length, in feet), for the Coast Guard. Following in the U.S. Light-House Service practice of naming them after trees, shrubs and flowers, the tenders were delivered in rapid succession. By the time the *Spar* was built as an Iris-class vessel, or Class-C vessel at Marine Iron and Shipbuilding, the process from keel-laying to commissioning had shrank from a 360-day average to 269 days. Statistics point to a building process averaging 192,018 man-hours of labor per

vessel.

*Spar*, built at a cost of \$866,000 (the inflation-adjusted equivalent of approximately \$14.3 million today), was one of 39 original 180-foot seagoing buoy tenders constructed between 1941–1944. Each was built in Duluth (21 at Marine Iron and Shipbuilding, 17 at Zenith Dredge Company) except the USCGC *Ironwood*, which was built in Maryland. In all, Duluth's seven commercial shipyards produced 191 steel ships of varied styles with an estimated value of \$200 million during World War II. Much of the steel used in this construction originated as iron ore from northeastern Minnesota, shipped from the Port of Duluth-Superior to steel mills on the lower Great Lakes.

According to a 1985 article from Roger Losey in the *Nor'Easter*, journal of the Lake Superior Maritime Museum Association, achieving this robust level of ship production required a new source of labor, with so many of the nation's men fighting abroad.

The Duluth shipyards, like industrial operations nationwide, began recruiting women to become welders, machinists and electricians. By the end of the war, Duluth's "welderettes" numbered 3,500 of the 14,000 persons laboring through the cold Minnesota winters to turn out

**SPAR'S WELDERETTES** continued on Page 17

# Seasons of Yore: 1953

## Sailing to a record



BY JAYSON HRON

Backed by China and the Soviet Union, North Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea on June 25, 1950, sparking a bloody war. The United Nations, formed five years earlier, responded by authorizing aid and forces to support the capitalist south, a venture that eventually swelled to include nearly 5.3 million American soldiers as the war dragged into 1953.

One of them was Captain Ted Williams, United States Marine fighter pilot and the greatest hitter who ever lived. The Splendid Splinter stroked 324 big-league home runs before arriving in Korea, but on Feb. 16, 1953,

he was straining for a different kind of round-tripper. Pocked by anti-aircraft fire, Williams was limping his damaged F9F Panther combat jet home to Suwon's K-13 airfield. Smoke and fire streamed from the sluggish blue bird, which sank too low for Williams to eject. His only hope was to bring the crippled aircraft in for an emergency landing, a hope that dimmed when an explosion shook the aircraft moments before it touched the airstrip.

"I had holes all over the plane and I was riding on all the prayers people say for me, 'cause I was awfully lucky. My plane was burning like hell when I crash landed," Williams would write later.

The Panther hit hard, wheels up, and skidded nearly a mile on its belly, scorching the tarmac with sparks.

Its nose burst into flame when the momentum stopped, which prompted

Williams to seek an even quicker exit from the cockpit. He blasted off the canopy, crawled out of the seat and limped away, first to a medic, and then toward 197 more home runs.

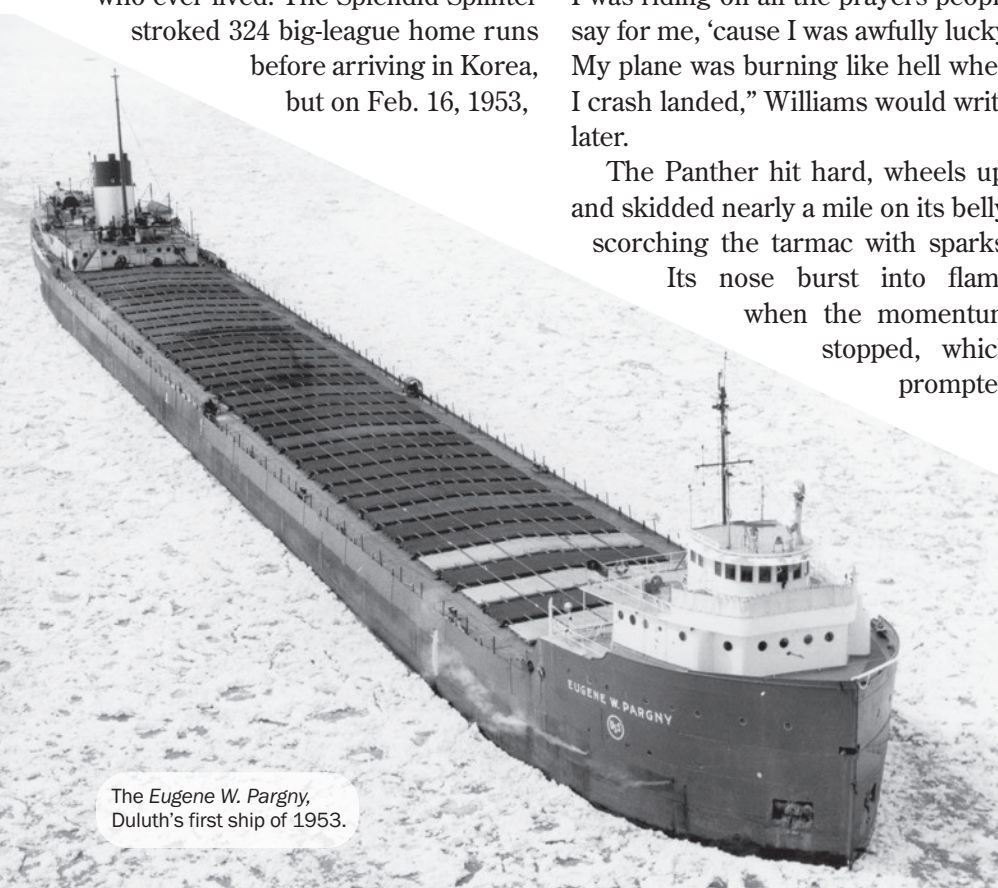
Two weeks later, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin died. Less than two months after that, Korean armistice talks began. The end was in sight, and with resources and aspirations aplenty, America was a rocket ready to climb.

### Spring tease

Supplying both the Korean War effort and American manufacturing of iconic automobiles was good business for Great Lakes shipping. Total tonnage from the Port of Duluth-Superior topped 63 million short tons in 1952, and a mild winter leading into the 1953 shipping season spawned optimism.

"For the first time in years, ice is hardly a problem," wrote Herbert J. Coleman, *Duluth News-Tribune* Port Beams reporter.

Donald Potts, president of the Pittsburgh Steamship division of U.S. Steel, expected his fleet of 64 ships to begin hauling iron ore several days earlier than they did in 1952. He predicted to the Associated Press that 1953 could be a record-breaking year for ore movement on the Great Lakes—maybe as much as 100 million tons, which would top the previous single-season record (set in 1942) by approximately 8 million tons.



The *Eugene W. Pargny*, Duluth's first ship of 1953.



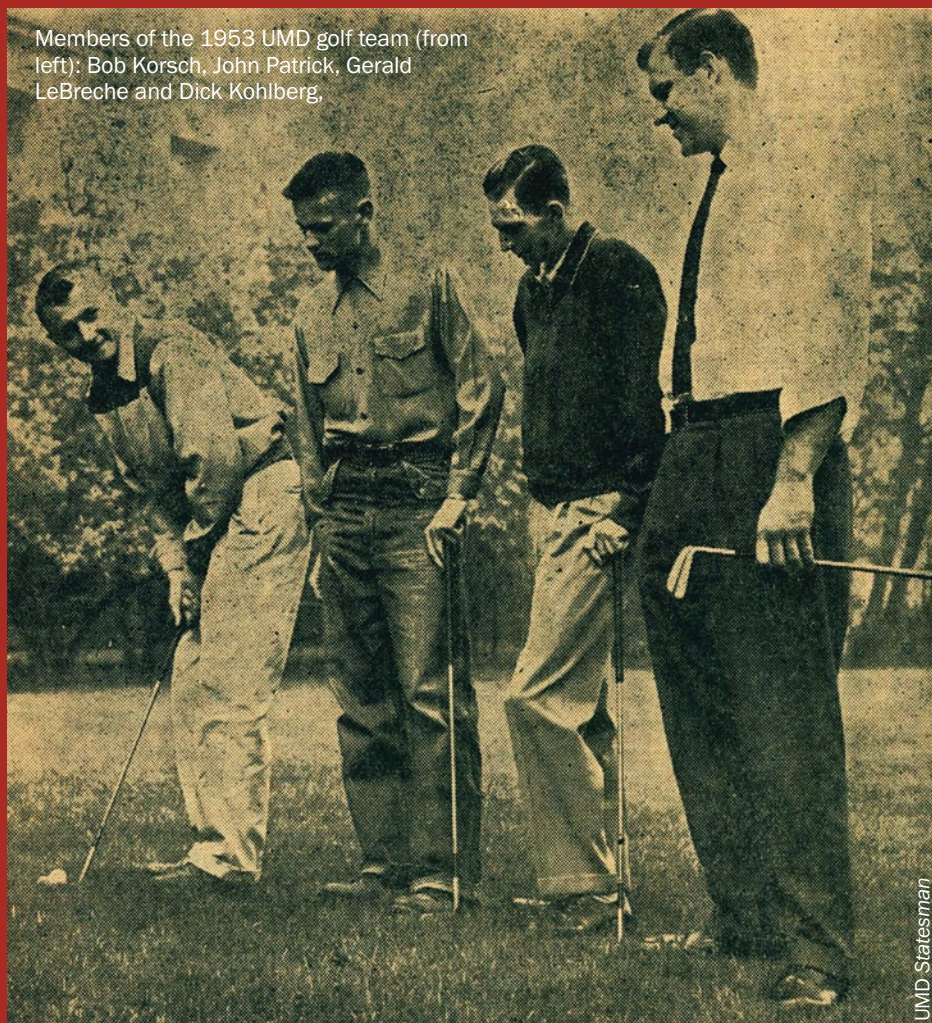
National Steel Corporation predicted big things, too. It was adding the 690-foot *Ernest T. Weir* to its fleet in 1953, the largest ship ever built on the Great Lakes, and company executives predicted that the *Weir* alone would haul 900,000 tons of ore by season's end.

In total, nine new ships were expected to poke their prows into the Great Lakes during the 1953 campaign.

When U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Woodrush* got underway for icebreaking in mid-March, her captain, Lieutenant Commander Russell H. Bergh, said he'd never seen such easy work in 30 years on the Great Lakes. In a single eight-hour day, the *Woodrush* and her crew sliced from Duluth all the way through the Superior entry, leaving both gateways open. After tying up for the evening, Bergh sent a simple dispatch to headquarters: "Duluth-Superior harbor suitable for navigation."

Conditions weren't quite as favorable in the St. Marys River, connector of Lake Huron and Lake Superior, so the Coast Guard dispatched *Mackinaw*, *Mesquite* and two steel tugboats to break lanes through the 14-20 inches of ice. Still, reports indicated that it was deteriorating quickly, and Coast Guard Captain Dwight Dexter predicted the river would be navigable

Members of the 1953 UMD golf team (from left): Bob Korsch, John Patrick, Gerald LeBreche and Dick Kohlberg.



UMD Statesman

within a week, if temperatures continued climbing.

The mercury topped a balmy 52 degrees Fahrenheit in Duluth on March 22. Shipping crews reported to their boats and golfers started cleaning their clubs. At the University of Minnesota Duluth, golf coach Lew Rickert welcomed the unusual possibility of late-March practice rounds. On his radio, WDSM-AM promoted its annual Navigation Jackpot contest to guess the arrival time of the first freighter from the lower Great Lakes to sail under Duluth's Aerial Lift Bridge. First prize was \$500 in cash. Duluth-Superior businesses also offered bonus prizes, ranging from televisions to luggage. The televisions, in particular, were exciting. Mel's Sales and Service sold its biggest and best black-and-white TVs—with a "huge 27-inch picture tube"—for \$685 dollars (equal to approximately \$7,000

today), so the prospect of winning one was alluring at a time when the average family income was \$4,000. Adding to the excitement, Duluth's first TV station was set to begin broadcasting in June, which was expected to give residents much better reception than Twin Cities-based WCCO and KSTP. Topping it all, true color television broadcasts were also coming soon, maybe as soon as Christmas 1953, if the Federal Communications Commission would approve. The technology was astounding. Imaginations ran wild. The future was now. Nothing was impossible for America, not even a direct, deep-draft water route from Duluth to the Atlantic Ocean.

#### First Ships

Only 13 oceangoing ships visited Duluth-Superior in 1953, mainly

#### **SAILING TO A RECORD**

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# SEASON UPDATE

SPRING 2022

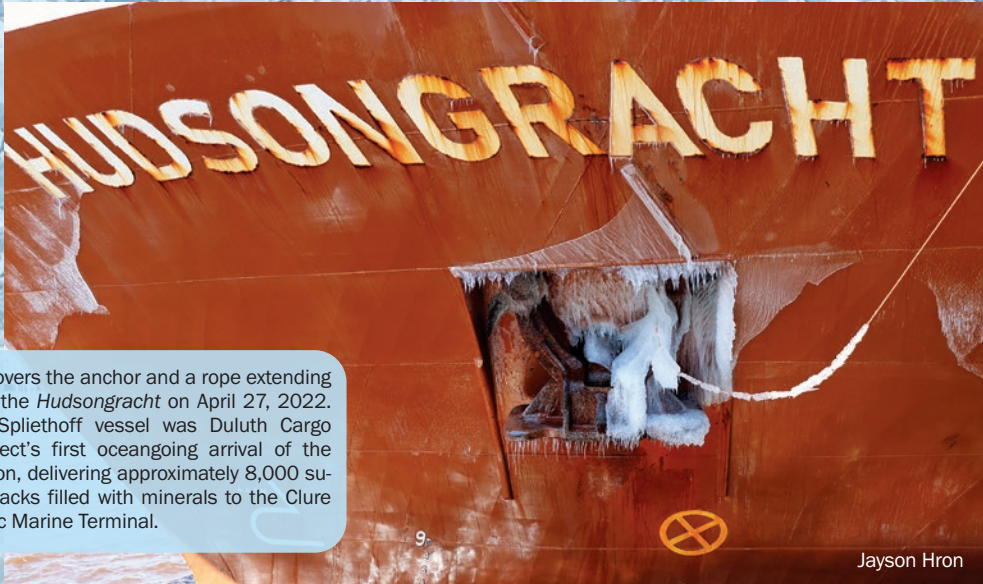
The nation's steelmaking capability utilization rate hovered near 80 percent through early spring, a level typically paralleled by roaring iron ore tonnage totals from Duluth-Superior ore docks. This season, however, the opening weeks of Great Lakes shipping delivered peculiarities instead. Notable among

them was the Lake Carriers' Association reporting a 55 percent year-over-year decrease in March iron ore tonnage.

A variety of factors affected the pace of shipping, but winter's gelid grip on the upper Great Lakes certainly played a role. Lake Superior's ice concentration

peaked at 80 percent on March 15 and quickly diminished, but protracted cold temperatures and often unfavorable winds—including some snow-spraying gales—plagued passage from the St. Marys River through the Soo Locks and across Lake Superior.

It was truly the winter that would



Ice covers the anchor and a rope extending from the *Hudsongracht* on April 27, 2022. The Spliethoff vessel was Duluth Cargo Connect's first oceangoing arrival of the season, delivering approximately 8,000 super sacks filled with minerals to the Clure Public Marine Terminal.

Jayson Hron

not end, with snow falling through much of April in Duluth-Superior and nighttime temperatures occasionally plummeting into the teens above zero Fahrenheit. Emboldened by the slow melt and piled by fierce winds, ice formations reached 10-12 feet in thickness across parts of Lake Superior. Working in tandem, the United States and Canadian Coast Guard dispatched a variety of icebreaking assets to the scene, including *Mackinaw*, the U.S. Coast Guard's only heavy icebreaker stationed on the Great Lakes. Ultimately, however, the ice won often, sending multiple Coast Guard vessels, including *Mackinaw*, to the docks for significant repairs. Lacking sufficient icebreaking assistance, Great Lakes freighters that did choose to sail early in the season occasionally found themselves beset

by ice on Lake Superior and in the St. Marys River, a static flotilla incapable of moving safely, let alone moving cargo. Even after fluid shipping lanes emerged, frequent storms and gales sent more ships to anchor, further impeding the efficient flow of Great Lakes cargo and commerce.

"Some aspects of the spring shipping situation were beyond anyone's control, but it definitely emphasized the need for passage of the Great Lakes Commerce Act, and with it, the modernization and probably also amplification of the Great Lakes icebreaking fleet," said Deb DeLuca, executive director of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority. "Both the U.S. and Canadian Coast Guard threw pretty much everything they had into the situation this year, but they were battling an adversary their aging vessels just couldn't

handle easily or expeditiously. It was a tough slog."

The pace finally picked up in mid-to-late April, with increased iron ore movement, coal and petcoke shipments, salt arrivals and the season's first general cargo deliveries to the Clure Public Marine Terminal. Grain sailings also began on both the Duluth and Superior sides of the harbor, hopefully signaling the start of a bounce-back season for the port's top export.

"We're grateful to the Coast Guard and also to the commercial tug boat operators who went above and beyond to support the breakout effort and get things moving this spring," said DeLuca. "They've earned more than a few months of smooth sailing, and we hope that's exactly what's in store."



Four thousand-footers simultaneously preparing to get underway for the season at the Clure Public Marine Terminal.

David Schauer

# Second ship satiates Irish cows' cravings

BY JAYSON HRON

Though it narrowly lost the race to be Duluth-Superior's first saltie of the season, *Finnborg* did register a first as the port's initial beet pulp pellet hauler of 2022. Arriving April 16 at Superior's Gavilon Grain Connors Point Terminal, the Dutch-flagged vessel swallowed 12,400 tons of the cylindrical grain cargo, which it then carried across the Atlantic Ocean to Ireland.

This most alliterative grain cargo begins as a sugar beet in the Red River Valley. The beets pack approximately 15 percent sugar inside their husks, and after processing, they yield baker's sugar, granulated sugar and a host of other sweets. The pulp is a processing byproduct, vegetable matter remaining after sugar is extracted from the beet. Mechanically pressed and dried, this pulp is pelletized to capture its nutritional matter and improve handling characteristics. The final product is an inch-long cylinder about the diameter of a pinky finger. It's typically delivered in bulk to the Port of Duluth-Superior via rail, transferred into grain elevators and then loaded by conveyor onto ships. The pellets then sail to European or African destinations for use as feed for beef cattle and dairy cows. The beet pulp fiber is highly digestible, making it a good non-starch energy source. Beet pulp pellets can replace corn silage or other forages, and for stock cattle, the pellets fulfill energy requirements. In dairy rations, the pellet improves the butter fat test.

"The cows in Europe love it," said John Freivalds, a Minnesota-based honorary consul for Latvia.

Jeff Blaskowski is fond of it, too, though not in his own diet. Instead, as manager of the Gavilon terminal, he appreciates the pellets' reliable marketability. As a

whole, the port exported almost 81,000 tons of beet pulp pellets in 2021, up nearly 18 percent over 2020.

"Grain markets can fluctuate, but beet pulp pellets are pretty steady," said Blaskowski. "They are a good source of income for us, especially in years when grain exports are slow. We expect to load them on at least 10 ships this year."

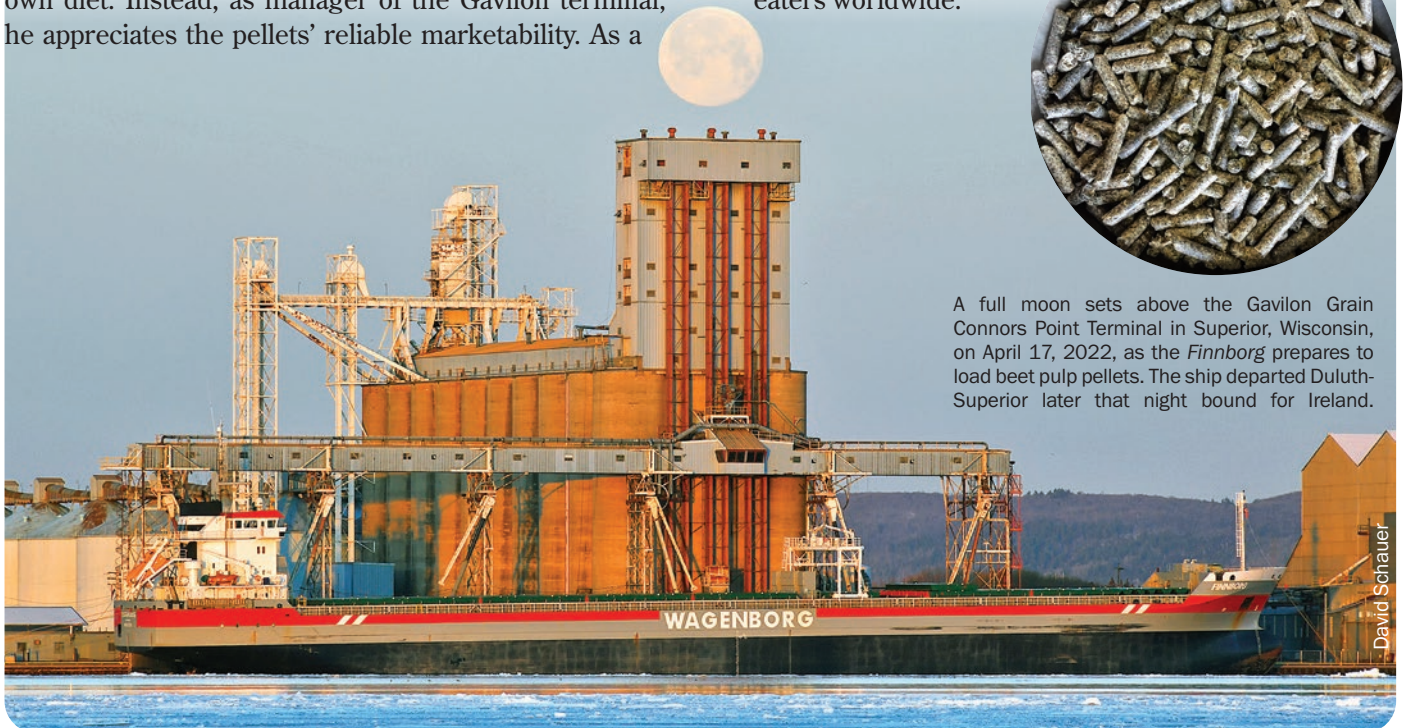
Beet pulp pellets have been good business in the port for decades. Freivalds helped market them for export in the 1970s with the I.S. Joseph Company, a Minneapolis-based feed commodities firm. The company moved a significant portion of its grain product through the Port of Duluth-Superior in those days, and Freivalds believes it was the first company to export beet pulp pellets from the port. Burton M. Joseph served as president of his father's company and maintained the close relationship, serving as a Duluth Seaway Port Authority commissioner from 1955–1961.

"Joseph was an agricultural garbage man," said Freivalds, who explained with admiration the company's knack for profitably selling grain byproducts, which could and still do sidestep certain European duties imposed on grains like corn or alfalfa. Business was so brisk that the company earned then-President Lyndon B. Johnson's "E" Award in 1966 for significant contributions to expanding America's export trade.

Beet pulp pellets played a significant role in achieving that honor, a role that continues today with happy pellet-shippers and happy pellet-eaters worldwide.



A full moon sets above the Gavilon Grain Connors Point Terminal in Superior, Wisconsin, on April 17, 2022, as the *Finnborg* prepares to load beet pulp pellets. The ship departed Duluth-Superior later that night bound for Ireland.



David Schrauer

# Resko arrives as First Ship of 2022 season

**R**esko, a 624-foot saltie from the Polsteam fleet, earned Duluth-Superior's 2022 First Ship honors, arriving April 13 at 6:32 p.m. local time to complete the season's first full transit of the St. Lawrence Seaway en route to the Great Lakes' westernmost port.

By tradition, this first full transit marks the annual opening of the Duluth-Superior Harbor, although the interlake navigation season began with the Soo Locks' opening on March 25.

After arriving through the Duluth Ship Canal and under the Aerial Lift Bridge, Resko visited the Gavilon Grain Connors Point Terminal in Superior to load approximately 16,200 short tons of spring wheat and 5,400 short tons of durum wheat destined for Italy.

The ship arrived in ballast after unloading more than 5,500 tons of steel skidded coils in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where it was also feted as that port's first international vessel of the season. Resko's journey originated in Ijmuiden, Netherlands, and included a stop in Burns Harbor, Indiana, prior to Milwaukee. Lukasz Pionke, captain of the Resko, earned First Ship honors in all three Great Lakes ports. It was his first time arriving as the First Ship, but far from his first time on the lakes. He navigates the route from Netherlands to Duluth-Superior often enough that he was anticipating a visit to one of his favorite local hamburger establishments: the Anchor Bar

in Superior.

Pionke said that despite the ice and winds on Lake Superior, this particular crossing was "not so bad," and that he and his crew encountered worse conditions on the North Atlantic Ocean. They shared their sea stories with media members, elected officials and representatives from the Port Authority, the City of Duluth and the City of Superior at a welcoming ceremony on April 15.

As for the Port Authority's 39th annual First Ship contest, co-sponsored by Visit Duluth, some 3,670 entries came from around the globe. Susan Stebbins, of Garrison, Minnesota, guessed 6:30 p.m. April 13, a mere 2 minutes off the official arrival time, making it one of the closest guesses since the contest began in 1984. For her winning prognostication, Stebbins received a grand prize package that included Duluth lodging, dining and entertainment.

(Right) Resko visited the Gavilon Grain Connors Point Terminal to load spring and durum wheat.

(Below) Resko arrives into the Duluth harbor as 2022's First Ship.



Lukasz Pionke, captain of the Resko



Gus Schauer



Jayson Hron

# First Ships Since 2010

*Earliest*  
\* earliest on record

MARCH 30*	Federal Hunter	2013
APRIL 2	Lake Ontario	2017
APRIL 3	Albanyborg	2016
APRIL 6	Arubaborg	2012
APRIL 7	Federal Elbe	2010
APRIL 8	Federal Churchill	2020
APRIL 11	Federal Leda	2011
APRIL 12	Federal Weser	2018
APRIL 13	Kom	2015
APRIL 13	Resko	2022
APRIL 15	Maria G	2019
APRIL 18	Federal Biscay	2021
MAY 7*	Diana	2014

*Latest*  
\* latest on record





## SPAR'S WELDERETTES

Continued from Page 9

ships for the war effort. The total number of civilian shipyard workers employed by Marine Iron and Zenith Dredge peaked at 1,200 and 1,500 respectively.

Thus, the U.S. Coast Guard 180s are historically significant not only as the first class of modern buoy tenders, and as part of an unprecedented military build-up, but also as milestones in labor history. American women helped build the 180s during the period when women first began to enter the nation's industrial workforce.

In breaking with the U.S. Light-House Service's flora-inspired naming tradition, the WLB-403 tender was christened in recognition of the U.S. Coast Guard Women's Reserve, called the SPARs (see explanation on page 9). *Spar* was commissioned on June 12, 1944, prior to assignment in Boston, Massachusetts. As a convoy escort during World War II, *Spar* conducted anti-submarine duty along the coast of Brazil. Following wartime service, she remained on the northeast coast, next homeported at Woods Hole, Massachusetts, in 1946, and Bristol, Rhode Island, in 1957.

In the late 1950s, as the Cold War intensified, a series of radar posts were developed along the Northwest Passage, named the DEW line. In support of the DEW line, the *Spar* was assigned to help "establish an escape route for radar-line supply ships which might become trapped in the Arctic by ice or war." The voyage began May 19, 1957, in Narragansett Bay, when the *Spar* departed for the Panama Canal Zone and the Pacific Northwest to rendezvous with the icebreaker *Storis* and tender *Bramble* to execute their mission.

Departing from Seattle on July 1, 1957, the three vessels traveled through Unimak Pass on their way to Point Barrow, Alaska, where they began their attempt to break through the historic Northwest Passage. Three months later, on Sept. 6, 1957, the *Spar* and its companion ships reached the eastern side of Bellot Strait where they were joined by the Canadian icebreaker HMCS *Labrador*. Lt. Charles V. Cowing, *Spar's* young skipper, had a moment to write a special entry into the vessel's log: "1320: Arrived eastern point Bellot Strait having completed transit of Bellot Strait and the Northwest Passage in company with the *Storis* (WAG-38) and *Bramble* (WLB-392), 109 days out of Bristol, Rhode Island."

On Sept. 12, 1957, the *Spar* crossed the Arctic Circle en route to its home base in Bristol. From Cowing's log: "The culmination of this assignment occurred when the Coast Guard Cutters *Storis*, *Bramble*, and *SPAR* became

Female shipbuilders in Duluth-Superior



The original *Spar*, WLB-403



the first vessels to circumnavigate the North American continent. (U.S.) President Dwight D. Eisenhower sent his personal congratulations for this significant accomplishment."

In 1966, *Spar* participated in a major oceanographic charting mission in the North Atlantic. Off the coast of Svalbard, Norway, *Spar* surveyed ocean topography, logging over 17,000 miles. During the expedition, *Spar* called on ports in Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Germany and Ireland before returning to its home base.

Following reassignment to Boston in April 1967, *Spar* moved to its last homeport in South Portland, Maine, in March 1973. In these later years, *Spar* went to Refresher Training in Little Creek, Virginia, beginning in 1981, where it "achieved the highest marks ever earned by an oceangoing buoy tender." In 1983, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1992 and 1995, *Spar* again returned from Little Creek with outstanding marks and proudly displayed a gold "E" with three gold stripes for nine consecutive overall "excellent" scores in operations and seamanship training. Because of this, *Spar* was recognized by Vice Admiral Paul Welling, Atlantic Area commander, as "the cutter with the most gold" in the Atlantic Fleet.

Following a half-century of work, *Spar* was decommissioned in 1997, and intentionally sunk as an artificial reef and dive site. The wreck is located about 40 miles south of Morehead City, North Carolina, in 100 feet of water.



## Sailing to a record Continued from Page 11

because there wasn't yet a St. Lawrence Seaway System. Only very small tramp vessels could maneuver through the 14-foot Canadian canals and sail into the Great Lakes prior to the Seaway and its related deepening projects, so those that arrived weren't viewed as significant, either for spectacle or as drivers of major economic benefit. Lakers made the headlines. The March 29 edition of the *Duluth News-Tribune* said, "Tanker to open season today," and it was notable because no oil tanker had ever copped First Ship honors in Duluth-Superior. The *Imperial LeDuc* became the first, sailing through the Superior entry at 4:36 p.m. The 6.325 million-gallon Canadian tanker loaded crude oil at Superior's Lakehead Pipeline Company dock, which it would carry to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario. At the time, it was one of the earliest First Ship arrivals in port history.

The first Duluth arrival came later that night, bringing with it some alarmingly cool temperatures. The Pittsburgh Steamship vessel *Eugene W. Pargny* nosed through the Duluth Ship Canal at midnight, amidst a noisy car-horn welcome from spectators parked in about 50 automobiles. Captain E.C. Bagantz sailed the *Pargny* to the Duluth, Mesabi & Iron Range Railroad ore docks, where the Ambassadors of Duluth presented him with a flag designating the veteran skipper as "Honorary admiral of the royal fleet of the Duluth duchy for 1953."

In a ship-to-shore conversation with the *Duluth News-Tribune*, Bagantz said he was surprised by the lack of ice.

### The Seaway

Despite five American presidents advocating over the course of 40 years for the construction of a St. Lawrence Seaway, opponents of the project, led most boisterously by railroad executives and elected officials from coastal ports, defeated the idea repeatedly. It incensed Midwesterners, who stood to gain the world by construction of the Seaway.

In April 1953, at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the topic, Minnesota Democratic Senator Hubert H. Humphrey said his home state wanted transportation *now* and didn't "intend to sit idly by and be choked to death by those that have it." He described Seaway opponents as "people who have made theirs and are sitting on it."

Canada had also grown frustrated with decades of American gridlock on the issue, declaring its intent to build the Seaway on its own, if the U.S. wasn't ready to move forward.

"It is rank treachery to the United States to deny ourselves the right to compete economically with the rest of the world, and the St. Lawrence Seaway is part of that competition," added Humphrey, who simultaneously championed a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers surveying project to determine what dredging would be necessary to create deeper shipping channels of 27 feet all the way from the Seaway to Duluth. This surveying action was approved by a senate public works committee, which Humphrey termed "the first constructive step taken by a senate committee during this session of



*Imperial LeDuc*



*Ernest T. Weir*



*Eugene W. Pargny*

*Imperial LeDuc* photo courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Superior Jim Dan Hill Library Archives; *Ernest T. Weir* photos courtesy of Bowling Green State University Historical Collections of the Great Lakes; *Eugene W. Pargny* photos courtesy of University of Wisconsin-Superior Jim Dan Hill Library Archives

Congress” to bring Minnesota closer to the benefits of a St. Lawrence Seaway.

Wisconsin Republican Senator Alexander Wiley shared Humphrey’s passion and brought forth in April and May 1953 what would be known as the Wiley Bill, or the Wiley-Dondero Bill, with additions from Michigan Republican George Dondero. The bill proposed a lower-cost vision for U.S. and Canadian partnership on Seaway construction. It wasn’t everything Seaway supporters wanted, but it did represent a compromise more likely to pass, and with time running out, it was time for actionable solutions. The biggest question was if American President Dwight D. Eisenhower would support the proposal.

### Ice and snow

While the Wiley-Dondero Bill ground through Capitol Hill, ships were grinding to a halt near the Soo Locks in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. The mild early spring had cooled. Snow flurries, rather than golf balls, were flying in Duluth and across Lake Superior. “Winter’s ghost won’t stay dead,” proclaimed the *Duluth News-Tribune*, in a headline apropos for 2022.

On April 8, the Associated Press reported a vast ice field packed to 20 feet high in the shipping lanes leading to the locks. *Business Week* magazine called it an almost unprecedented pileup. The blockage stopped more than 150 freighters, “believed to be the greatest assemblage of Great Lakes ships in history,” on either side of the Soo Locks. It was deemed one of the worst ice delays in the history of transit between Lake Huron and Lake Superior.

“The jam means substantial losses for shipping companies, and it has prompted steel mills to refigure their estimates of ore supplies,” wrote the *Business Week* editors.

Cold and snow also forced the UMD golf schedule to undergo refiguring, which was bothersome to Coach Rickert, because he had a surprisingly strong group of players who came out for the team. They wanted action.

### Warming to the challenge

By April 25, the *Business Week* Index, which gauged the temperature of America’s economy, was pointing north, up 22 points year over year. So too was total Great Lakes tonnage, despite the earlier ice blockage. The Seaway also seemed to be gaining momentum, thanks primarily to President Eisenhower taking the stance that the U.S. should be involved in the project, though he wasn’t yet sure to what extent.

Throughout the coming months, he listened long and hard to arguments for and against the Seaway, but in truth, he had always favored the project, even for its national security merits dating back to his time as Major General Eisenhower of the U.S. Army. With North Korea, China and the Soviets still rattling sabers, he liked the idea of a

more united North America, buoyed by a jointly-operated binational waterway capable of efficiently moving its key resources.

In his 1954 State of the Union address, Eisenhower removed all doubt.

“Indeed our relations with Canada, happily always close, involve more and more the unbreakable ties of strategic interdependence. Both nations now need the St. Lawrence Seaway for security as well as for economic reasons. I urge the Congress promptly to approve our participation in its construction,” he said.

Afterward, the *New York Times* wrote, “The momentum of a good idea is irresistible, once it gets a proper push. This is being proved by the astonishingly swift progress of the Wiley-Dondero bill to join Canada in building the St. Lawrence Seaway.”

Three months later, Eisenhower signed it into law. The Seaway would finally become a reality.

### Record-setters

Despite a staccato start, the 1953 shipping season—and golf season—would prove memorable in Duluth-Superior.

Rickert’s Bulldog golfers did eventually get on the course for an abbreviated schedule. Led by Dick Kohlbray, Bob Korsch, Gerald LeBreche and John Patrick, UMD won the 1953 MIAC championship and qualified for the NAIA national tournament in Abilene, Texas, finishing third overall. It was the highest team finish in a national tournament for any UMD athletic program until the men’s hockey team finished second at the 1984 NCAA Tournament.

As for the Port of Duluth-Superior, it floated 77,243,545 short tons of cargo in 1953, almost 23 percent more than the year before, and a total tonnage record that still stands. Outbound tonnage, comprised largely of a record 65 million tons of iron ore, jumped 26 percent over the 1952 total.

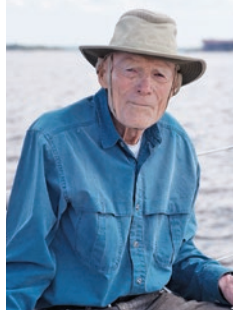
The *Ernest T. Weir* also lived up to the hype, breaking all existing Great Lakes cargo records by loading 23,584 tons of iron ore in Superior on Sept. 10, 1953.

The DM&IR Railroad hauled a record 49 million tons of iron ore that year, pulled in part by the first of its diesel locomotives, which debuted in 1953, and would slowly replace its steam fleet by 1961.

Duluth-Superior finished 1953 as the nation’s No. 2 tonnage port, trailing only New York City.

“There has been in fact a great strategic change in the world during the past year,” Eisenhower told the nation. “That precious intangible, the initiative, is becoming ours ... let our joint determination be to hold this new initiative and to use it.”

It was truly the start of something big. 



## Salute to a Hero: “Captain Bill” William A. Carlson, 99

Few people can boast of surviving a German submarine attack during World War II, much less helping fellow passengers escape their torpedoed ship, as well. One man who could—yet humbly chose not to—was William A. Carlson, or “Captain Bill,” as he was known to many folks around the Port of Duluth-Superior. A decorated American hero, Carlson died Feb. 6, 2022, five months short of his 100th birthday.

It seems fitting that Carlson was born on Independence Day, July 4, 1922. His biological parents were from Finland, but he was adopted as a toddler and raised in Duluth—growing up in a Central Hillside home with a Lake Superior view. Carlson knew he wanted to sail at a young age. He enlisted in the U.S. Naval Reserve as a 17-year-old high school student. His plans to graduate ended when he was called to active duty in November 1940, halfway through his senior year.

For the next five years, Carlson served his country, first aboard the USS *Paducah*, a training vessel of the Duluth Naval Militia that was moved to Brooklyn, New York, in December 1940 to train sailors for battle during World War II. Carlson was trained as a U.S. Navy Armed Guard gunner. These gunners served on armed merchant vessels, protecting the merchant fleet from Axis forces.

He was assigned to the *City of New York*, a freight and passenger ship of the American-South African Line. On March 29, 1942, it was torpedoed by a German U-boat off the coast of North Carolina.

“We manned the gun and started firing at the periscope, but the waves were 20 feet high,” Carlson shared in an oral history, preserved at the Veterans’ Memorial Hall in Duluth. “We fired about 10 rounds and then he pulled his periscope down, went around the other side, put it back up, and let us have another torpedo. That one hit in the after-hold and then it started going down pretty fast.”

For the next day and a half, he was among 32 people

packed in a lifeboat, bailing and battling tough seas. They were rescued by the USS *Roper* after Carlson saw a dark shape on the horizon and used a flashlight to signal SOS—the only letters he knew in Morse code.

In 1944, Carlson was transferred to the Pacific theater, where he served aboard the LSM-461 during several operations, including Okinawa. He was honorably discharged Oct. 1, 1945. During his service, he was awarded a Commendation Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal.

Back in Duluth, Carlson sailed briefly on the Great Lakes before settling into a 30-year career at Cummins, repairing and servicing diesel engines. He also reenlisted in the Naval Reserve two more times, serving a total of 34 years in the military over three separate enlistments. He retired from both the Naval Reserves and Cummins in 1982 at the age of 60. Still interested in sailing, he earned his 100-ton captain’s license and spent years with Sea Service, LLC, which owns and operates the Twin Ports pilot vessels that serve foreign ships.

“Bill was the first marine engineer and relief captain we ever hired, when we were starting out in the early 1990s,” said Captain Ed Montgomery, owner and operator of Sea Service. “He turned out to be our finest and longest serving.”

Montgomery was among those present in 2021 when Carlson was awarded the Norwegian Convoy Cup Medallion for his service aboard the *City of New York*. The ceremony was held at the Honorary Consulate of Norway in Minneapolis.

Carlson and his wife, Ann, raised three children in Duluth. His daughter, Lin (Linda) Meyers remembers her father as a skilled mechanic, sailor, marksman, hunter, fisherman and avid reader. But his greatest passion was sailing.

“He sailed his 30-foot sailboat, the *Elaine Tyler*, on Lake Superior until the age of 95,” she said. “My fondest memories of him will always be the two of us sailing together; I was lucky to have such a wonderful, brave and adventurous father.”

Carlson was preceded in death by his wife, Ann; son, William Carlson II; daughter Kathleen Wall and grandson Shane Wall. He is survived by his long-time partner, Winifred Kroeten, daughter Lin Meyers, three grandchildren and four great grandchildren. A memorial is being planned around the Fourth of July, which would have been his 100th birthday.

“He was a very knowledgeable, experienced and humble guy who will be greatly missed,” said Montgomery. “When he passed, it was like the best maritime academy had burned down.”

# *A boat, a baby, a bridge*

## *Chance encounter stirs poignant memories*

BY SAM COOK, DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE; REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION



Sam Cook  
Duluth News Tribune



Bob Welton

The wind was out of the east, sweeping across Lake Superior and smacking the massive rocks along the Duluth Lakewalk.

But unlike so many recent east-wind mornings in this Winter That Would Not End, this one had come bright and clear. The whitecaps rolling toward the Duluth ship canal were a brilliant white. They frothed along, riding an inland sea of deepest blue.

The three of us—four if you count the yellow dog—had come down from the hillside to get some exercise. My daughter had already taken off for her run. She was pushing a three-wheeled cart with her son, age 8 months, riding in the buggy’s basket, well-swaddled against the 40-degree chill.

The dog and I walked the same path, and if we timed things right, we’d all end up back near the Duluth ship canal at the same time.

As we neared the end of our outing, we realized the Aerial Lift Bridge was going up. We knew what that meant: A big ship would be coming through the ship canal any minute.

“Let’s go,” my daughter said.

The three of us hustled to the walkway along the ship canal. Sure enough, the *John G. Munson*, with a tummy full of taconite, was just making the turn toward the bridge. The span was already cranked up to its full height.

I don’t care how long you’ve lived in Duluth or how often you come visiting here. This never gets old. You

watch the hulk of that great vessel approaching the canal, completing its turn, now sliding under all of that gleaming steel. You have to stand along the concrete wall, up close, to appreciate once more how big these boats are, how huge and amazing the lift bridge is, how tiny we humans are in comparison.

We knew what was coming next in this ritual, and I was a bit concerned about how it would go. The *Munson* was going to belch out several deep bass notes to salute the bridge. The bridge, in a matching alto response, would acknowledge the ship’s greeting.

All of which unfolded on cue: the incredibly deep notes from the *Munson* and the bridge’s corresponding reply. I thought maybe the blasts would frighten young Rennie, looking on from his mom’s arms, but he didn’t flinch. From inside his pile-lined snowsuit, he just watched the gleaming bridge and the great hulk of the *Munson* and the gulls wheeling against the blue sky.

And I’ll admit it. Something caught in my throat. It came on me without warning, and I knew what it was about and so do you.

Suddenly, I was transported back about 37 years, with Phyllis at my side, holding our young daughter, watching another ore carrier come sliding past, the crew members working on the deck, the great blue beyond of Lake Superior waiting.

It was good then and even better this time. 

# Stewart announces retirement from UW-Superior

Dr. Richard Stewart, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Superior and founder of the school's Transportation and Logistics Research Center, announced his retirement recently. His last day at UWS will be May 25, 2022.

In addition to his teaching role, Stewart was co-director of the Great Lakes Maritime Research Institute and formerly served as chair of the UWS School of Business and Economics.

A licensed steam and motor vessel master, Stewart came to UWS in 1999 and shaped its nascent undergraduate transportation and logistics management offering into a globally recognized program of study, with graduates advancing to marine transportation leadership positions around the world. Program alumni now populate companies such as Great Lakes Fleet, American Steamship Company, MSC, CMG, Cargill, and the Duluth Seaway Port Authority.

Under Stewart's leadership, the UWS Transportation and Logistics Research Center was awarded over \$11 million in funded research. He taught a wide range of college courses throughout his academic career, including a 35-year continuous run of marine transportation management and port/terminal management courses. He also oversaw hundreds of internships and authored more than 150 published articles and studies, including a groundbreaking effort in 2003 that helped initiate development of the CN Duluth Intermodal Terminal, operated by Duluth Cargo Connect.

Prior to shifting into academia, Stewart served as an unlicensed merchant mariner in the Vietnam War zone before being appointed to the United States Merchant Marine Academy (USMMA) in Kings Point, New York, from which he graduated in 1973 with a bachelor's degree in marine transportation.

After graduation, he sailed aboard merchant vessels and held command for several years before coming ashore as a fleet manager. In 1979, the U.S. Coast Guard issued



Dr. Richard Stewart

Stewart a ship master's license, which permits him to command any size vessel in any oceans and navigable waters of the world. He has maintained this license for more than 40 years. He also served in the U.S. Naval Reserve for 30 years, retiring with the rank of captain in 2003.

In 1987, Stewart returned to King's Point as an associate professor with a master's degree in environmental studies from the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. He rose through the academic ranks to become a full professor and

head of the academy's marine transportation department. During his tenure at USMMA, Stewart earned a PhD in urban and environmental sciences from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

In recognition of his accomplishments as an educator, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents issued Stewart its 2020 Teaching Excellence Award. He was the first faculty member from UWS to receive this award.

Stewart's dedication to advancing the maritime industry is long-standing and extensive. He has been an active member of the Society of Naval Architects and Marine Engineers since 1972, he served as national vice president of the Council of American Master Mariners, he has been a member of the International Ship Master's Association, and he continues to be a member of the Duluth-Superior Maritime Club.

"Dr. Richard Stewart is truly one of a kind," said his longtime UWS colleague Professor Daniel Rust. "His half-century of service to the transportation—especially maritime—industry is remarkable, but even more remarkable is the breadth of his accomplishments from commanding oceangoing vessels and managing a fleet of ships to developing new academic programs at two universities. Moreover, Dr. Stewart cares deeply about people and leads by example. He will be profoundly missed at UW-Superior, but he leaves a legacy of excellence that will continue for many years to come."

# Boerner in as Maritime Club president

The Duluth-Superior Maritime Club announced Karis Boerner as its new president at the organization's February luncheon. Boerner succeeds Pete Weidman, who served a two-year term as president.

A former hospital corpsman in the United States Navy, Boerner is the club's 62nd president since its inception in 1933, and the second woman to serve as president. Kate Ferguson of the Duluth Seaway Port Authority served as Maritime Club president from 2015–2017.

The club was making plans for its annual National Maritime Day celebration as this issue of *North Star Port* went to press. For more information, please visit the Duluth-Superior Maritime Club's Facebook page.



Karis Boerner and Pete Weidman

# IN FOCUS: Adam Bjornberg

*Our In Focus series profiles the photographers whose images bring the port's working waterfront to life.*

## How did you first get into photography, specifically the shipping scene?

I've always had a passion for photography but got into it about a year ago. I was taking photos and videos of ship arrivals with my iPhone to start. After several people reached out about my work, I took it more seriously and purchased my first camera and lens. It has been awesome to connect with local waterfront photographers and people in the shipping community from the region and even some across the world!

## Is photography your primary profession? If not, what is?

As of now, photography is just a hobby. I work for a drone company called SkySkopes as a remote sensing project lead. We are a drone service provider mainly working in the energy sector.

## What draws you to Great Lakes shipping and the working waterfront for images?

I am drawn to the history that most of the lakers carry with them and the variety of vessels that visit the Duluth Harbor. It's also interesting to see the loading and unloading of cargo. Not a lot of people know how things operate once a ship enters the harbor.

## Do you have other specialty focus areas as well?

I mainly focus on the shipping industry here in the Twin Ports, but I also enjoy shooting landscapes and northern lights activity when the opportunity arises. Being in Duluth we have plenty of opportunities along the North Shore for landscapes and dark skies for astrophotography!

## How would you describe your approach to photography?

If I had to describe an approach, I would say documentation. I love to describe the scenes in my photos. For the shipping photos, I try my best to give descriptions of the vessel—where it came from, why it's here and where it is going. For my landscape photos, I like to describe the conditions when I took the shot.

## How do you know when you get a great one?

I prefer to go out during sunrise and sunset to capture any shipping activity and its surrounding environment. Colorful skies and harsh conditions almost always make a great photo. I also feel like the chances are good for a great photo when I capture two or more ships in one shot.



Adam Bjornberg



Photos by Adam Bjornberg, BjornbergPhotography.smugmug.com



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