

# Great Lakes Shipping Chronicle

SINCE 2014

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## Freighter Tecumseh Suffers Major Engine Room Fire



The Tecumseh on September 18, 2019. Photo by Isaac Pennock

**Dec. 15~** The M/V *Tecumseh* was downbound on the Detroit River on Sunday, December 15, when at around 2 pm, a notification was sent to the U.S. Coast Guard regarding an engine room fire. The USCGC *Bristol Bay* was sent to the scene along with another response boat and a helicopter. The *Tecumseh* lost power and drifted into Canadian waters where she anchored near Windsor, Ontario.

All 16 crewmembers were safely evacuated the ship. It was reported that only one member received minor injuries. The *Tecumseh* was then towed to the nearby Morterm Dock where the fire was put out and the vessel could be assessed.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada investigated the ship and engine room, and it has been linked to a main engine failure. The ship sustained extensive damage. It is unknown what will become of the *Tecumseh* at this point in time.

## President Trump Signs Soo Locks Bill into Law

**Dec. 25~** Great Lakes shippers got a big Christmas present from the federal government this year. President Donald Trump signed the bill that approved \$75 million in federal funding for the new Soo Lock into law just before Christmas. Now, as long as funding continues to be approved in a timely matter, the entire project is projected to be completed by sometime in 2027. The project in its entirety will cost around \$922 million.

## Port of Monroe Awarded \$1.1 Million Federal Grant

**Jan. 7~** Senator Gary Peters (MI) announced that the Port of Monroe has been awarded a \$1.1 million federal grant to expand its operations. The grant was awarded through the U.S. Department of Transportation's America's Marine Highway Projects Program. Paul C. LaMarre, the Port Director at Monroe, announced that they intend to purchase a Manitowoc MLC165 crawler crane to assist in cargo handling at the port's docks. This is a step forward in modernizing the Port's abilities and equipment.

## Woman Falls Overboard, Drowns

**Dec. 10~** a woman fell into the water in Burns Harbor and drowned earlier last month. Sara Murawski, 30, fell into the water between the dock and the docked ship *Wilfred Sykes*. Murawski was on shore collecting her belongings after getting off the ship when she fell in.

She was not wearing a life jacket when she fell in, and a witness attempted to rescue her, but was too late. She was retrieved by a diver in over 30 feet of water, and was pronounced dead after being taken to the hospital.

In Memory of  
Sara Murawski

## USCGC Mobile Bay Ready for Service



The Mobile Bay at her dock in Sturgeon Bay, summer 2018. Photo by Brendan Falkowski

**Dec. 17~** The USCGC *Mobile Bay* has returned to Sturgeon Bay, and is ready to go for this year's icebreaking season. The tug was taken to the Coast Guard shipyard in Baltimore during the summer of 2018 for a major refit. The ship received new navigational systems as well as a new lifeboat system, modernized crew bunks, and other much-needed system upgrades. The *Mobile Bay* turned 40 in 2018, and with her recent refit, she will be guaranteed another 15 years of service.

## Grain Shipments Down In Toledo This Season

**Jan. 6~** Grain shipments have been below average this year for the Port of Toledo. With above average rainfalls this year, farmers struggled to plant crops. Because of this, grain was down 50% this year for the Port of Toledo. On the other hand, it was still a solid year for Toledo. With the new Cleveland Cliffs HBI plant coming online next year, Toledo will see many more freighters inbound with cargoes of iron ore for the plant.

## Winter Means More Work yet to be done

While the ships may not be out hauling cargo for much longer at this point in the season, there is still more to be done. Several shipyards around the lakes are keeping busy working on getting the boats ready for next year. From dry-dockings and hull inspections to steel renewal and painting, they are doing it all. The *Algoterra*, *Edgar B. Speer*, *Great Republic*, *John J. Boland*, *Kaministiquia*, *Radcliffe R. Latimer*, and *Rt. Hon. Paul J. Martin* have all been placed in drydock and are undergoing work, with several more awaiting their turns to sit high and dry.

Bay Shipbuilding alone is scheduled to have 12 vessels in for layup and winter work this year. Their shipyard in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin is always filled with activity this time of year, especially this year, as they are currently constructing a new cargo barge and new lake freighter. Ironhead Marine in Toledo currently has the *Great Republic* in drydock for her inspection and hull painting, and should have a few more through the drydock before the spring. Donjon Marine in Erie, Pennsylvania has their work cut out for them. The boats have begun to arrive for work, and they are also busy rebuilding the tug *Joseph H. Thompson Jr.* to be paired with VanEnkevort's new barge under construction in Sturgeon Bay, the *Michigan Trader*.

## The Future of Shipwatcher News

**Jan. 11~** you will notice over the course of the next month, Shipwatcher News will undergo a major makeover. Updates to the newsletter will include a new format and a change to a bi-monthly publication. The featured vessel section of the newsletter will also be coming back. A new website is also currently in the works. Unfortunately, this is increasing the operating costs of the publication. In an effort to continue to produce the Shipwatcher News newsletters as free publications, I am instituting a sponsorship program to help support upgrades to the business. My goal for website fundraising this year is \$400. This money will go towards securing a website domain for the next 5 years, email services, as well as taking ads off of the website. Should they desire, donors will be recognized in the Shipwatcher News newsletters as well as on the website. As of January 11, 2020, \$125 has been generously donated to help meet this goal. There is a form attached to the newsletter if you feel moved to participate in the sponsorship program.

Please Support us!

Please print the sponsorship form on the website and fill out.

You can find it on

<https://glshipnews.wordpress.com/great-lakes-shipping-chronicle/>

Then mail to the attached address.

Thank You!

## Shipwatcher News

### Store

The Ship's Store has its own page at [www.glshipnews.wordpress.com/store/](http://www.glshipnews.wordpress.com/store/)

Special Thanks to Daniel Lindner and Isaac Pennock for sharing their photos. Check out their work at

[www.freighterfreak.wordpress.com](http://www.freighterfreak.wordpress.com) ,  
<https://gltugs.wordpress.com/>,  
<https://glships.wordpress.com/>

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**Thanks for Reading!**

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