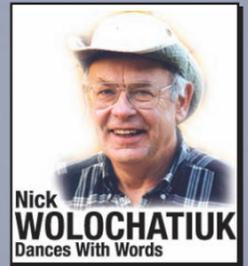
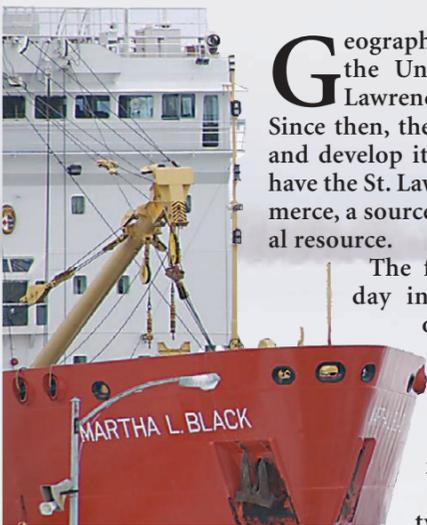


INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ALONG THE SEAWAY



Nick
WOLOCHATIUK
Dances With Words



Geography and politics made Canada and the United States fight over the St. Lawrence River during the War of 1812. Since then, they eventually learned to share it and develop its potential. As a result, we now have the St. Lawrence Seaway, an artery of commerce, a source of hydro power and recreational resource.

The following is a narrative of one day in the story of the annual re-opening of the shipping season.

The Seaway shipping season usually closes at the end of December. Depending on ice conditions, it usually opens near the end of March.

This year it was March 19 when two icebreakers, the CCGS *Martha L. Black*, based at Quebec City, and the USCGC *Penobscot Bay*, home ported near New York, started working their way up-river from Montreal's St. Lambert Lock. The larger Canadian vessel led the way, the smaller American one trailed behind, widening the channel.



THE BRIDGE IS UP – For the first time in 2008, the Valleyfield lift bridge was raised on Thursday, March 20. When ice conditions permit, the passage of cargo vessels on a daily basis will cause frequent but necessary interruptions in road traffic.

(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)

CCGS MARTHA L. BLACK – She's the 93-metre-long (c. 279-foot) icebreaker that started opening up the 2008 St. Lawrence Seaway season. Starting at Montreal's St. Lambert Locks, she got as far upstream as beyond the Iroquois Lock by Easter weekend's Saturday, March 22.

(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)



Conditions varied from open water, where there is a vigorous current, to ice as thick as 30 inches. It takes repeated passes to clear the accumulation of ice in the immediate area of the locks and to break up the ice within a lock.

A modern icebreaker is designed to clear its way by crushing the ice, not by ramming it. The combination of three things break up the ice: the vessel's massive weight (3,818 metric tonnes, or 83,996 pounds, if you prefer—or the weight of about 3,000 automobiles), undercut bow, and tremendous power (5,250 KW—and I have absolutely no idea what that is in horsepower).

It took almost eight hours for the two vessels to make their way from Beauharnois Locks to the Snell Lock (between Massena and Cornwall), where the vessels overnighted. Average speed was about eight knots.



WHERE ARE WE? – That's a critical question, one that can always be answered immediately, and in detail, thanks to the wide variety of sophisticated navigation and communication equipment on board the "Martha L. Black."

(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)

By Saturday, the *Black* was working the river near Brockville and the *Penobscot* was clearing the Bay of Quinte, west of Kingston. Technically, spring has arrived. The shipping channels are being

opened, the migrating robins are pushing northward, but the daffodils are still asleep under the snow. As soon as ice conditions permit, the *Black* and the *Penobscot* will be able to resume their other roles of search and rescue, navigation aids maintenance, environmental research, pollution control, border security and law enforcement.



ENTERING FIRST BEAUHARNOIS LOCK – The USCGC "Penobscot" is a 140-foot-long (c. 47 m), multi-role cutter that accompanied the "Martha L. Black" to open the 2008 Seaway shipping season. Her home port is Bayonne, NJ, in the heart of New York Harbor. Ordinarily, she assists commercial ships and barge traffic on the Hudson River, as far north as Albany, New York.

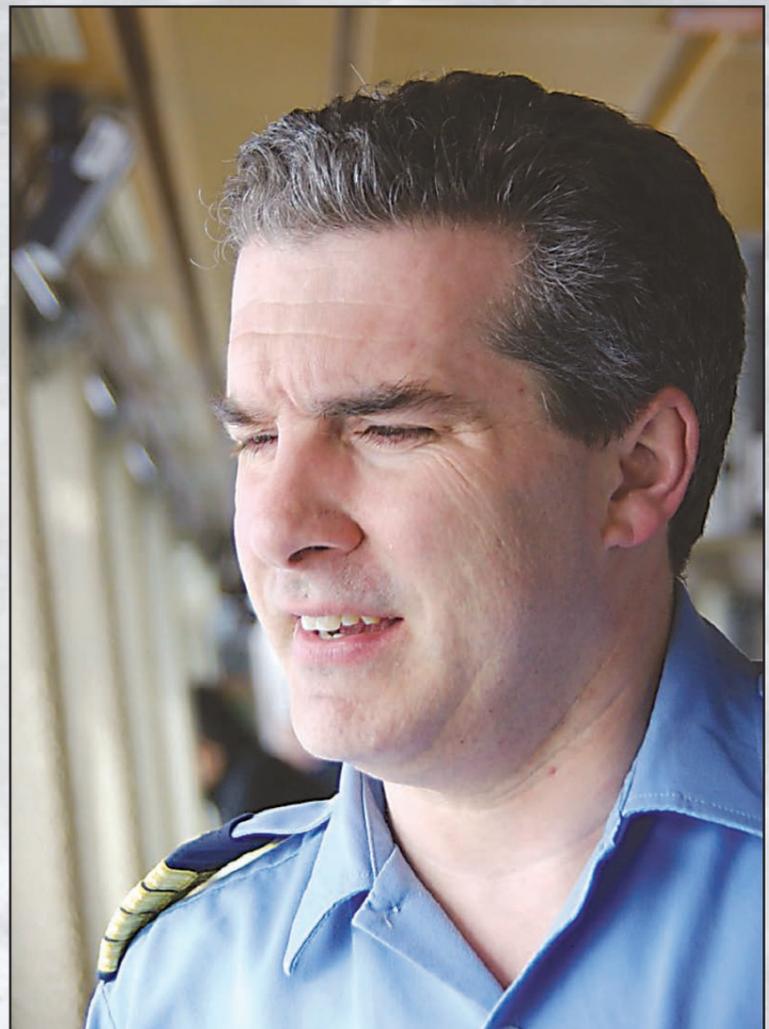
(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)



ENTERING SECOND BEAUHARNOIS LOCK – The cavernous lock walls, built in 1957, can accommodate the standard maximum dimensions of the Great Lakes bulk carriers: 730' length, 75' beam and 27' draft.

(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)

Canada and the United States, through their coast guards, work together to monitor, share and protect their common marine environment. It was an honour and a pleasure to have been allowed to observe and report upon this activity. A special thanks to all those who made it possible, including Carol Bond and Brian Riddell (CCG Sarnia), Alain Garioppi (captain of the *Martha L. Black*) and the hospitable and efficient men and women of her crew.



CAPTAIN ALAIN GARIEPPI – He has 28 years of Coast Guard experience behind him. In addition, as a summer job, he worked aboard a Montreal Harbour tour boat. Under his watchful eye, the CCGS "Martha L. Black" undertakes a wide variety of essential support services. The vessel's home port is Quebec City.

(Photo by Nick Wolochatiuk)