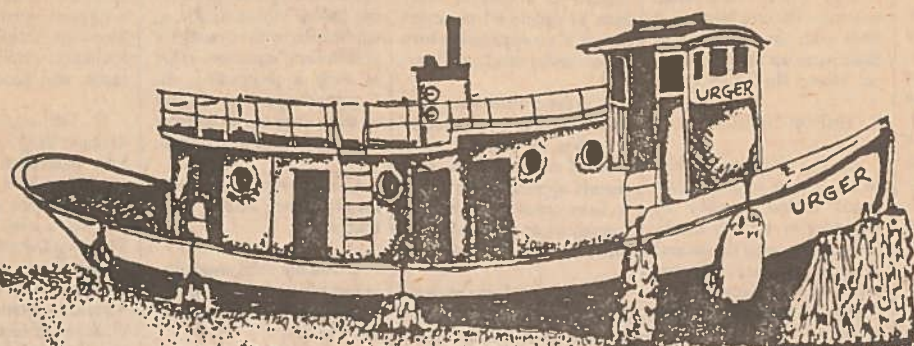


Bethinking of Old Orleans

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TUGBOAT URGER

This summer, one of New York State's most venerable tug boats, the 72 foot long, 90-year-old tug, URGER, will spend July and August voyaging along the New York State Barge Canal system, carrying a cargo of information, education, and fun. Project URGER is calling all children, canal lovers, and municipal officials in the Empire State's 30 canal communities to join in the fun. The URGER will be docked in Albion all day Thursday, August 22 and all day in Medina Friday, August 23.

At each stop, the URGER will celebrate the canal system's history, while simultaneously looking at its present and future. The canal is a 400-mile-long classroom. Two on-board-the-URGER educators will share information about the busy life of the canal and suggest learning experiences for hands of all ages. There's math and biology and poetry and chemistry, botany and physics and language arts in the Erie Canal's watery classroom.

All children and adults are welcome to board the URGER at every stop to see firsthand her powerful diesel engine, meet the engineer, the deck hands, the skipper, the on-board educators and to hear about the glory days of steam and bustling canals. Perhaps performing groups will want to use the URGER also as a platform while it is docked.

The Alliance for Arts Education are looking forward to communities using the URGER for the holding of art competitions, using the deck for art displays, singing, dancing, celebrating our canal history in every art form.

Likewise, the National Maritime Historical Society is eager to have a wider audience knowledgeable about the magnificent part tugs like the URGER have played in our maritime history.

If a non-profit organization wants to use the URGER for a special program, please get in touch with either the Albion Chamber of Commerce or the Medina Chamber of Commerce.

Ninety years ago on June 13, 1901, a steel-hulled steam tug christened the HENRY J. DORNBOS slid from the ways of Johnston Brothers shipyard in Ferrysburg, Michigan, just south of Muskegon on the shore of Lake Michigan. The Detroit Free Press boasted that the new tug "... would be the finest boat in the local fishing fleet." For some twenty years the DORNBOS had a colorful career

as a Great Lakes fishtug and gallantly served as a vessel of the Life Saving Service, the forerunner of the United States Coast Guard.

On August 19, 1920, her name was changed to URGER and soon she left the swells and rollers of the Great Lakes to take up a new vocation as a canal tug in New York State. Bought by the Department of Public Works in 1922, she joined the maintenance fleet of the newly-completed Barge Canal System. Soon after WWII, the URGER exchanged a diesel engine (Atlas Imperial) for her well-used steam engine, serving on the Erie Canal until 1986. Though no longer in service as a work boat, the URGER remains the senior vessel of the canal fleet, and is one of the oldest tugboats in the nation.

Amazingly, at four score and ten, she is about to embark on yet another chapter in her long and remarkable career. Beginning on July 3rd at Rome, where the Erie Canal began 174 years ago, the URGER will tour from the Hudson River to the Tonawandas during July and August. The primary mission of today's URGER is education through celebration — celebration of the myriad network of waterways which reach from the Atlantic shore to the inland seas.

From the ancient time of the Native American, the first inland navigators, to fur traders in canoes and Durham Boats to immortal DeWitt Clinton and his mighty ditch to the great Barge Canal System with its tugs and motorships, the natural and man-made waterways of this state have charted the pageant of our history through the centuries. They are branches in our family tree.

Project URGER is sponsored by the National Maritime Historical Society and the Alliance for Arts Education's Imagination Celebration. Special cooperating organizations include the Waterways Division of the New York State Department of Transportation; Waterways; New York's Waterfront news, and the two municipalities at the eastern and western lock entrances to the Canal — the Village of Waterford and the City of Lockport.

Everyone is invited to meet this grand old lady of the Erie Canal, the tugboat URGER; Skipper Schuyler M. Meyer, Jr., Engineer Gary Matthews and Educators Blayne Cutler and Cynthia Griffin.