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Oka

6211-04-037

Mar. 1, 2006.

To the Hudson Gazette:

I see that there is to be another public hearing in March re the Oka Ferry. Having used the convenience of this ferry more times over more years than I can remember, it is hard to understand why the objections over the use of bigger safer boats. For years the 4 other ferries on the Ottawa River have been using this type of vessel. Having been in the local marine business for over 50 years and held a D.O.T. certificate for craft the size of the proposed ferries, I assure you that this type of vessel would be far safer to operate in these waters than the present system of barges and tows due to the big increase in pleasure boats including the slower moving sailboats in this area. The diesel engines in the proposed ferries will naturally be the latest re the environment, with much improved exhaust mufflers exhausting into the air instead of into the water.

As far as increased traffic goes, it has and will increase like every area around here regardless of the size of vessels used. The only way to help relieve the traffic tie-ups is by the use of more efficient equipment.

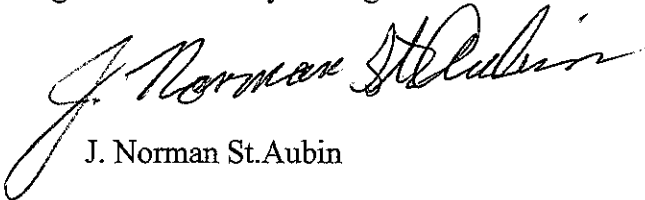
To those who feel that their view of the lake will be obstructed when the boats are hauled out in the winter, may I suggest that they drive from Pt. Cavagnol to the tracks in Hudson Heights They will see approx. two places where one might get a brief view of the lake. In the last two years two 2 story houses have been built, one next to the ferry and the other on the opposite side hardly 100 feet away. I don't recall hearing any complaints about blocking the view of the lake when they were built. You might also notice that most of the houses built in the area have been built after the ferries were operating.

If roughly 200,000 vehicles are carried per year, (your paper), an uneducated guess would be that close to 300,000 people make use of this route in only 6 months. It seems that the bottom line to all the objections to a needed service, that so many people have depended upon for all of these years, (1920's) is similar to those who built homes next to the Dorval Airport and complained about the noise!

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Having visited the dredging site a number of times during the digging, strictly as a curious onlooker, I have seen wild ducks swimming within 20 feet of the shovel in operation as well as the odd heron standing in the shallows on the edge of the channel. Obviously their feeding area was not disturbed.

Enclosed is a photo I took of the Quebec Voire (Roads Dept.) dredging the channel on the "Como" side, using their own equipment, in March of 1988. Does anyone recall hearing about studies, inquiries on environmental impacts etc. when this work was done so that the ferry could continue to operate? So what's the problem now? It's the same river and same mud. The channels were dredged last fall to accommodate the larger safer vessels so let's get on with it, stop wasting time and money talking about it.



J. Norman St. Aubin