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Capt. Stephen Gomes, aboard the John A. MacDonaTg: Our job primarily is for escort- ing, assisting ships in the area. Gulf of St. Lawrence. It's part of commerce. Break? ing the ice, breaking a path through the ice so a freighter can get to its destina? tion, so commerce can be continued. Other? wise there'd be no ships going up the Gulf. You'd go up and get stuck. We're also search-and-rescue. Tow ships in, disabled ships, rescue people from sinking ships. It's all part of the Coast Guard service. The major icebreakers, which this one is, are (also) for escorting tankers, bulk car? riers, out of the high Arctic. We escorted the ferries (between Cape Bret? on and Newfoundland) the last two weeks. The ferries were having a lot of trouble coming into North Sydney, so we had to es? cort them back and forth. I was on one of the (ferries) here a few years ago--one week right off Low Point here. One week solid. We could move--I mean, the icebreakers could go right a- round the ferries. But it was so much tre? mendous pressure on the ice there. And there was no track. When the icebreaker passed along, there was no track any more. He wasn't breaking anything at all. He was pushing the ice out of the way. But as far as he pushed the ice, it just went right back. Just like a vice. Closed in right be? hind us. You couldn't make a path at all. There was no path whatsoever. And the ice--you've got to realize what pressure, a tremendous pressure. The wind was from the northeast, it was 40-knot winds. It was pushing all this ice against the shore. Then the ice started piling up on top of one another. We had about 5 or 6 feet of ice just piled up. Continuous-- rows and rows of it. We went around the ferry, right around, around in circles-- and just chewed it up almost like mush. But it was still piling up. And the pres? sure came right on it, pushed it altogeth? er. So the ferry had no path to come in to. When we passed the ferry, it just closed right in again. He couldn't even get moving. And then you've got to watch your sea suc? tions. You've got all this snow. To keep the engines cool, we have suction, cool? ing water going in the ship all the time. Instead of pulling in water, you're pull? ing in ice. So all the condensers and eve? rything are plugged right solid. So they've got to keep clearing it and clear? ing it all the time. It's a long, drawn-out operation. You've got to have a lot of patience. You're go? ing back and forth, 24 hours a day some? times. And no results. And you've got to think, "We're burning up money--it's tax? payers' money too, you know. Geez, we can't do this forever." So we make a coup? le hours run--"Look, it's useless. Let's sit here and wait till the wind stops." The wind could blow for 4 or 5 days, in the wrong direction. Can't do anything. And that year they even brought up the big? gest icebreaker, the Louis St. Laurent. And she got here, same thing happpened." She_ Bagnell's Gift Boutique Camera Supplies, Handcrafts, and Souvenirs Open Year 'Round - 7 Days a Week In the Heart of Louisbourg Danena's Restaurant and Take-Out OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK Home Cooked Meals * Home Baking 383-2118 South Harbour On the Cabot Trail near Cape Nor4h '29)