

## Summer Cruise – 2005

The 2005 Summer WSSC Cruise consisted of nine boats participating in either the 1-week or full 2-week portion of the cruise:

- Bubbles – one week – George Shiffer & Arlene Marie
- Efficacious – one week – Jody Larrow & Tina Askins
- Mardi Gras – one week – Dan Williamson & Peggy Hillen
- Seekinder – one week – Mike Warchol & John Samuelson
- Snowbird – one week – Dave & Joni Gardner
- Venture – two weeks – Lary Smith & Rich Stahley
- Wings of the Morning – two weeks – Bob & Barb Howard & Rachael
- WinQuest – two weeks – Doug & Kathy Howe & Herb
- Flying Dragon – first weekend only – Terry & JoAnne Trush

The cruise was to start on Friday, 15 July, but both Efficacious and Venture left on **Thursday, 14 July**. Efficacious spent a night in the shadow of Middle Sister Island while Venture headed down the Detroit River from Harbor Hill and spent the night at Colchester. There was no wind, so both boats motored to their port.

On the lake on **Friday, 15 July**, Venture's first waypoint was to be the Colchester Reef Light about 3 miles out, but they could not see it in the haze until they were within a mile of it. That was the case for most of the day...lots of haze, but there was wind from the East at about 5 knots so they could sail. Through the haze they could barely make out both Pelee Island and the Perry Monument on South Bass Island even though they were between them and not that far away. Most of the other boats headed south to the South Channel and then on to Kelley's Island and Seaway Marina. (Distance – about 50 miles)

In port we had been told that we would have a dock, but to them, dockage means rafting 3 or 4 deep off an old wall that had bolts and broken timbers in it. Venture pulled in first trying to put fenders and lines to keep them off the old wall. Efficacious rafted off of Venture. Next to come in was Bubbles who was not happy about the rafting-off possibilities. Marti Gras was next to arrive and so, at about 6:00, those in port headed off to town about a mile away for dinner. Tina had suggested that we go to the Village Pump, which was noted for its Brandy Alexanders and Perch dinners. Four of those in attendance shared 2 pitchers of the specialty, but nobody had any perch.

When we arrived back at the boats we found that Seekinder had rafted off of Efficacious and that there were 2 powerboats off of them. Because of all the weight and wind, they had pulled Venture off the fenders and onto the original docks. Lary told the last two boats that they had to leave which they did. Eventually Wings of the Morning and Flying Dragon arrived to complete the group. We did not see Snowbird at Unique Marker Marina and received a phone call telling us that WinQuest would not be there until the next day.

**Saturday, 16 July**, was a day of sightseeing around Kelley's Island. The first thing was to rent golf carts as it was about .5 mile from the boats to the facilities and another .5 mile into town. This island has many cart rental places and lots of them seem to be rented; there appeared to be more carts than cars on the island. The Marina offered carts for 24 hours for \$120 while others rented them by the hour.

Rachael, Barb, Bob, Arlene Marie and George had a cart with Rachael driving. Jodi, Tina and John had their bikes. Lary, Rich, Mike, Dan, Peggy, Terry and JoAnne shared another cart. We headed out about 11:00 heading clockwise around the island. Around the island we found a

large quarry on the west side and on the north is the State Park with some glacier groves. These groves are very large being 135 feet long. The State Park has a nice beach and an enclosed harbor that would be great for an anchor-out, unless there was a north wind.

The cart people found each other at the Island Brewery for lunch. In the afternoon some went out again to investigate the island some more. For dinner we went to the Island House and had great meals. This was an up-scale restaurant, but with no air conditioning. The cart people make it back to the boats fine, but those on bikes decided to check out the Island Brewery until late into the night and then found it rather hard to bike back in the dark without lights.

**Sunday, 17 July**, we took the carts into town to the Bag the Moon Bar and Restaurant for breakfast before turning in the carts. For a not great price we had a not great meal. At least we can say that we ate at almost all of the places on the island (only West End Bar was left).

Out onto the lake there was concern about the winds, but as we got settled down past the Sandusky Bay area, we had a nice ride with 4-9 knot winds from the west. We were able to sail almost into the Vermilion harbor. (Distance - about 20 miles) We docked at the City Water Works docks. After arriving into port it started to rain.

For dinner many ate at Ednamae's and had a good meal. After that we headed to the park for their summer concert series of a Barbershop Quartette Chorus from Elyria. Back to the boats we sat on each other's boats and chatted while sipping specialty drinks.

**Monday, 18 July**, was again a day to enjoy the town of Vermilion. This morning the forecast was "muggy", "steamy", or something like that. It sure was with the heat index over 100 and the temp about 92. A good place for breakfast was back at Ednamae's. For lunch many went to the old Soda Shoppe at the main corner in town. We all had ice cream drinks with Jodi polishing off his Brown Cow in a matter of minutes.

In the early evening we attended a wine & cheese party in the pavilion and then off to the Old Prague for dinner followed by Ednamae's for ice cream. By the time that we got back to the boats it looked like a storm would be there soon and it was within minutes. Lots of wind, rain and lightning. After that we went to the pavilion and a second storm came through and we all decided it was time to head for the boats and to bed.

**Tuesday, 19 July**, several went back to Ednamae's for breakfast. Upon departing, we had no sooner reached the outer part of the breakwall when we were able to put up the sails, as the wind was 4-5 knots from almost behind us. We were able to sail, wing on wing, all the way to Cleveland, but it took 7 hours. (Distance - about 30 miles) At least the storm had brought some cooler air and it was quite comfortable on the lake. For dinner this evening some of the WSSC boaters ate in the Edgewater Yacht Club dining room. Afterwards there was time for cards and dominoes.

At about 11:00 on **Wednesday, 20 July**, all but Dan and Peggy departed on Venture for a ride up to and on the Cuyahoga River, under the bridge to Shooters for lunch. We arrived at the bridge about 11:45, but had to wait for 30 minutes for it to open high enough to let us through; it only opened a small distance for the power boats. Lunch was slow with them giving us plenty of time to have drinks. Dan & Peggy joined us after looking at a boat in Mentor Harbor. What we did have to eat was enormous and good! About 2:15 we left after trying to figure out the \$330+ bill for now all 17 of us. Dan, Peggy, Mike and John headed back to the EYC while the rest of us went onto the museum basin. After getting all off, some went to the Science Museum, some went to the Rock 'n Roll Museum and some went to the ore carrier museum there in the harbor. That ship was the flagship of the Cleveland Cliffs line and had lots of amenities for the Captain and guests. A local group is restoring it and what they have done looks great. At 6:00 we headed back to the EYC where we arrived at 6:22. A great time had been had by all. Dinner was again at the Club restaurant with about 12 of us eating together. After dinner it was back to the boats to try to plan for the rest of the trip.

**Thursday, 21 July**, was when the two cruises split. Those on the one-week cruise spent one night in Loraine, two in Huron and then on to Middle Bass Island. They motor sailed most of the way except for having high winds trying to get into Middle Bass Island State Park.

Those continuing on with the two-week cruise headed out about 11:00 into 4 knot winds from the North. We were able to sail almost all the way to Chagrin River, but by then the winds had died to less than 2 knots so we decided to motor the rest of the way. As we pulled into the Fairport Harbor outer harbor we noted that the winds were about 7 knots from behind us. (Distance – about 28 miles) By 5:30 we were all at the marina office to register and pay and then move the boats further upstream to Pickle Bills for dinner. This is a really fish oriented place with lots of fish and fishing gear hanging from the ceiling and walls. It is also noted for lobster. Doug, Kathy and Lary had the surf 'n turf, which consisted of an 8 oz lobster tail and an 8 oz steak...great! Bob and Barb each had a 1 pound lobster. Bob's remark was that it was the best meal yet! Back at the boats we now had to move them across the river to the Grand River Marina's Sailing Center. We were given the slips the furthest in and near a bathroom facility. The docks left a little to be desired and there were bare wires inside the electrical box. Doug had a hard time finding a circuit that actually worked. On Lary's way back to the cockpit he tripped on something and fell on his right thigh. He was sore for the next few days.

During the early hours of **Friday, 22 July**, a rainstorm came through. The first thing on today's agenda was to decide what to do about the next few days. The weather sounded like Monday would be the best day to cross the lake with Saturday being the nicest day in a long while. We talked about the concern of going to Ashtabula with both depth and availability. Because of this Lary suggested going to Geneva-on-the-Lake State Park instead. Kathy called them and found that they could accommodate us by rafting Wings of the Morning off WinQuest and with WinQuest and Venture having a point along the wall. The price would be \$1 per foot and Sunday we could move into actual slips on the other side of the marina. We made the reservations. We all then walked into town (about .5 mile) for lunch. After lunch all but Lary went to the Tartan factory to watch them build sailboats. When they arrived back at the marina it was time to all climb on board WinQuest and shuttle back to Pickle Bill's for dinner at 6:30. Dinner this evening was like last night's except with lots more people being there. When we left about 8:00 the outer lobby was full of people waiting for a table...we wondered where they all came from. Again all of the food was great.

On the way back from dinner aboard WinQuest someone suggested watching a movie. Because of Lary's leg, it was suggested that we do it aboard Venture. Barb had a number of films including *The Incredibles* that they had gotten from NetFlicks so we watched that. It was so funny that even Bob managed to stay awake for the 2 hours. After the film it was time to clean up and head for bed about 11:00.

The weatherman indicated that **Saturday, 23 July**, might be the best day of the trip because it was to be cool (low 80s) and sunny. About 11:00 we all left the marina and headed down the river to the outer harbor where we found 10 knot winds from the NE and about 3' seas with rollers. By taking first North and then long East legs we were able to tack our way ENE to Geneva-on-the-Lake. The 15 mile distance thus took over 25 miles and 8 hours. We were put along the north wall of the State Park Marina. WinQuest arrived about 30 minutes before Venture. Wings of the Morning arrived about 20 minutes after Venture and rafted off of WinQuest. The marina is fairly new and has room for about 400 boats. They have a shuttle service for those that are, like us, on the far wall. We asked the driver where there were good places to eat and he suggested was The Firehouse Winery.

We called the shuttle to take us near the facilities and then a bus came to get us, at \$2 a person, to go into town about 2 miles away. We found the Firehouse Winery to be a busy, all outdoor restaurant. Herb managed to find some people leaving the end of a long set of picnic tables so that we could have 8 seats with shade from a building as the sun set. We arrived about 6:30 and probably didn't leave until close to 9:00 because of enjoying the entertainment. Lary even danced. They served wine in plastic glasses. All had good food in an unusual setting.

Today, **Sunday, 24 July**, was to be a day of rest. Rich and Lary got a ride into town for a nice breakfast on the porch at Mary's Kitchen. At various times throughout the day, others found their way into town. Geneva-on-the-Lake was probably built in the 1920s and appears to have not changed much over the ages. There were many old entertainment/amusement places like one might find along the Atlantic coast. After being in town, most walked back to the marina taking a shortcut through the new State Park Conference Center. After lunch Venture moved to

the other side of the marina, but there was some confusion as to whether other slips would be available so the others stayed along the North wall. In the afternoon a little storm came through with some rain, but not much.

For dinner we all took the shuttle into town to go to Sandy Chanty. The chef was French so it was a little strange having a French meal in such a location. The backboard behind the bar was from the building's original 1920s shooting gallery that the owner had managed to get working. It had been plastered over and had had a wall in front of it. The bar contained 300 pounds of sand, probably to stop the bullets. What made the place even more interesting was that it was also "sign-up to sing" night with people bringing in their guitars and singing. After dinner we had ice cream across the street and then called for the transportation system to take us back to the marina.

We were all up early on **Monday, 25 July**, as we intended to cross Lake Erie to Port Stanley. We talked with the charter fishing captains, but they were not sure what to expect out there (they go out 18 miles). Finally one of them said that he had heard 5' rollers, and that was only about 4 miles out; there was also lots of fog or haze, but the temperatures were cool. We all left by 10:00 with the idea that we might come back if it was too bad. What we found was an apparent wind off our port bow as long as we maintained a speed of about 6 knots with the engine. With the sails up we were able to increase that speed a little. There were 3' rollers that subsided to about 2' as we continued to cross the lake. The actual crossing was fairly uneventful, except for it being long. One thing that seemed strange was that at about the middle of the lake flies started to appear so we had the hatch screen in and we were in the cockpit with fly swatters. When we headed out of Geneva-on-the-Lake we could see nobody else because of the haze. A few hours out Venture could make out Wings of the Morning off to the left and traveling about the same speed. We could not see WinQuest until about 10 miles from Port Stanley when the weather cleared and we could actually see the shore.

Into Port Stanley Venture caught the 5:30 bridge opening and arrived at our destination about 5:40. (Distance – about 50 miles) We were along the wall just inside the small Kettle Creek Marina. WinQuest was already on the far outer dock and Wings of the Morning next to them. The river was very muddy which we assumed was due to the rain, but were later informed that it is always that way. The rest rooms at the marina were very nice with sink and toilet for each of men and women. These also had a chair, flowers and reading material in them. There were 2 shower rooms with a glass-enclosed shower and even a squeegee for wiping down the walls. The showers also had an extra chair and lots of other nice things. We asked the gal in the office (owner Fiora) where to go eat and she suggested BJ's on the beach. This wasn't too bad, but it was about a mile away, was outside in the sun, and had lots of flies bothering us. It also had loud rock music blaring. Back to the boats after dinner we all decided that we were too tired to do anything like cards. Rest came easily! It had been a hard day.

On **Tuesday, 26 July**, we first had breakfast at The Roxy Diner and then headed off to find the places that took our "Special Guest" cards that had been set up to make visitors welcome. The Public Library had free Internet access and Herb spent much of the day there. Rich and Lary walked to the Foodland store to get groceries for the rest of the trip. The "Killer Desserts" store had some great cheesecake samples. Our "Special Guest" card allowed us to have a free cookie each. During the morning we moved both WinQuest and Wings of the Morning from outside the breakwall to the inside, like Venture. Lunch was again at The Roxy Diner with the idea that we would take the 3:00 tour train trip out of town. It was an interesting trip. No sooner had we left the station than it started to rain. Those in the open car really got soaked. Our group was the only group in the enclosed car on the way going, but not on the way back. We were told things about the area including the fact that the brown water of Kettle Creek was normal as there was a lot of turbulence in the riverbed which kept it churned up all the time. Following the trip we managed to get a screen made for Wings of the Morning for over their fan and WinQuest offered a tarp for above that. Dinner this evening was at the up-scale Kettle Creek Inn, but again the screen door to the outside serving area was not shutting tightly, so there were a few flies present here also. Lary had venison, Barb had lamb, Rich and Rachael had cheese and fruit. A great meal topped off with going to an ice cream store; they even had 0% sugar cappuccino ice cream. When we arrived back at the boats we piled aboard WinQuest to watch the movie *En-*

*trapment* while Herb sat on Venture resting and reading. Kathy made popcorn while we watched the movie.

It was raining when we awoke on the morning of **Wednesday, 27 July**, and had apparently rained all night. We went to breakfast again at The Roxy Diner. We all managed to catch either the 10:00 or 10:30 bridge opening. What we found on the lake was waves of about 2" and winds of about 2 knots. We decided to motor all the way. Lary noticed that the wind was again about 32° off our course so we pulled out the jib and got another .1 knot out of our speed. It didn't take too long to decide that we needed sweaters and/or coats as it was only in the low 70s. It did rain part way, but then we had times of sun also. As we neared our destination there was strong wind from the north again causing us to put on sweaters and coats. As we arrived at the outer break wall of Erieau (Rondo) Lary noticed plastic notches on the cockpit floor. They had come from the shear pins on the Autohelm 3000 and now there were none left to steer the boat. Just one more thing to fix when we return.

Venture's first stop into Erieau Marina was to the fuel dock for 54.55 l of diesel (about 17 gallons) and a pump-out for C\$63.98! Our dock was in an inner harbor on a metal & cement dock about the same height as the deck. They put Wings of the Morning next to Venture and WinQuest across the main pier from us. The pier may have been an old coal loading dock as this used to be C&O property and was a way of shipping coal to/from Cleveland. Not too far from us were the facilities on shore along with a nice pool and exercise room. (Distance - about 50 miles)

For dinner we went to Molly & O.J.'s in "town". Town here seems to be where the end of the rail line was and where the workers lived. There are just a few stores with the general store also serving as the gas station, movie rental, worms, ice cream, Cuban cigars and post office. There were 3 restaurant-bars and a gift shop that may not be open. Dinner was nice. Some of us had one of their "Indecision Platters" consisting of chicken, perch and shrimp. Back at the boats a game of Dominos was started on the pier between us. They had to break up about 10:00 because of the cold and lack of light (although they did use a flashlight to see). Each was bundled up as much as possible and was still cold. The weather forecast for the evening said that London got down to 11° (52°F). Tomorrow it should get to 26° (78°F).

On the morning of **Thursday, 28 July**, some of us headed to Kathy's for breakfast. For 22 years she has run the place and it seems to be the local hangout for the town. As everyone came in they were addressed by name by her or her mother and everyone seemed to want to chat. A group of 2 fishermen at one table grew to about 10. She said that it was the "Circle of Wisdom" table and that they had even made calling cards stating such. Everyone was very friendly and willing to chat. Back at the boats we found that others were lining up for the laundry facilities next to the pool. In the same building was another set of restrooms and exercise center. There was also a table with a phone wire coming out with a sign saying "Internet Access" at the other end of the phone cord.

For lunch we all headed to Kathy's and then visited most of the other stores in Erieau - all 6 of them. After lunch the group playing dominoes decided to go into the pool. The air was nice so the water didn't seem too cold.

Prior to dinner we had a wine & cheese party on the dock. Again this evening we went back to Molly and O.J.'s. After dinner we played dominoes on the dock and then went to bed.

On the morning of **Friday, 29 July**, some went back to Kathy's for breakfast. All of use left the harbor by 9:00. There was little wind out on the lake and the seas were fairly flat with less than 1' waves. For most of the day Venture and WinQuest were within a few hundred yards of each other as we motored along. We tried adding the sails, but by noon they were flapping so were taken down. As we passed the Pelee Passage Light we heard from Wings of the Morning that they had been following what they thought to be WinQuest (no Venture with them) and had run aground because of being too close to Pointe Pelee. We asked if they had been watching their chart and if they had put a mark when they hit, but it seemed that they had done neither. Venture pulled into Scudder Marina a little after 4:00, just a few minutes after WinQuest. (Distance - about 45 miles) A few minutes later in came G'Day who had motored most of the

way from Gibraltar. Jodi was with John and Joan so we now had a group of 11 people once Wings of the Morning joined us.

For dinner we went next door to the Scudder Beach Bar & Grill (the old grocery store) and had only a fair meal. Back at the docks John and Jodi took their bikes off to the Lighthouse while the rest of us (less Herb) climbed aboard Venture and watched the movie *The Count of Monte Cristo*. When John and Jodi returned and joined us on the floor of Venture we did have 10 watching.

We awoke on the morning of **Saturday, 30 July**, to find that it had been a very windy night. Lary tried calling other WSSC members who were supposed to join us to see who else might be coming. He found that Bubbles had lost their depth sounder the previous Sunday on their way home from Middle Bass Island and were actually starting to sink. Bubbles has been repaired and was just relaunched Friday. Rich Schnacez said that he had been to the boat on Friday to get it ready to come today, but the engine wouldn't work. He would have to take time to get it fixed.

Lary went to visit some old friends living on the island and then met up with the rest of the group at the Wine Pavilion where they had come by bus at noon. Doug, Kathy and Lary took the 2:00 tour while the rest headed back at 3:00. This was the best tour that we have ever received there at the Pelee Island Winery. Our guide, Andrew, spent time talking about the types of grapes showing us different varieties outside. He then walked us to a flower garden and discussed the prickly pear cactus that grows on Pelee. We then went to the Vidal grape area to see how they are experimenting with growing the grapes with a screening on each side to allow more direct sunlight to get to each grape and leaf and to keep the grapes away from the birds. We then went to the old wine barrels that they had converted into picnic booths (each barrel can hold 3000 bottles of wine, can be used only a limited number of times and has no nails or screws because they would flavor the wine). We then went inside to see the old press, the cork display and then the wine "bug" display. We finally went downstairs to see the movie and on into the tasting room (about 3:10) where we sampled 5 of their better wines. This whole process lasted about 2 hours so we really got our money's worth (\$5), especially when we were able to take away the \$2.50 wineglass. During the wait for the 5:00 shuttle we purchased some wine and then just sat in front of the pavilion waiting. With the temperatures in the upper 70s and a light breeze, it was very comfortable.

For dinner the entire group got a shuttle from The Wheel and Anchor Inn (the old Pelee Island Yacht Club - still having PIYC on the bill) where we had their buffet dinner at \$27 a person. The food was very good with prime rib, BBQ ribs, chicken, fish and lots more. We walked the roughly 1 mile back to the boats afterwards taking our time. To finish the evening, Bob, Barb, Rachael, Doug, Kathy, Rich and Lary played Dominos aboard Venture using the large table.

On the morning of **Sunday, 31 July**, we found that the past night had been very quite compared to the one before. We all left by 10:30 with fairly calm seas and no wind so motored straight to the Colchester Reef Light and then on to D33. As we passed Colchester Reef Light we saw that G'Day had stopped to swim, as there were 3 heads in the water around the boat. When Venture arrived at D33 at 2:10 where there was sufficient wind to sail slowly, but they had already decided that they would go on up the river to Harbor Hill. They took the Amersburg Channel going past Boblo Island and Amersburg and then continued along the Canadian shore going past LaSalle. They carefully followed their GPS as the channel is poorly marked. There are a lot of marinas along the Canadian shore with LaSalle Mariners being the one with the most sailboats. They finally arrived at Harbor Hill at 7:20 meaning that it had been a 9 hour trip; our longest yet. While the log meter registered this as a 55.4 mile trip, the GPS said it was only 50 miles; the difference being due to the current in the Detroit River.

It had been a good trip of over 350 miles and 73 hours on the water for Venture. We were pleased to have been able to actually sail most of each day to Geneva-on-the-Lake; pleased to not have to cross Lake Erie with conditions like last year while crossing Lake Huron; sorry that there had been so little wind from Port Stanley on; but very pleased to be in the company with other West Shore Sail Club boats.

Lary Smith