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Cruising the Great Lakes

Take a trip with Victory Cruise Lines | PAGE 4

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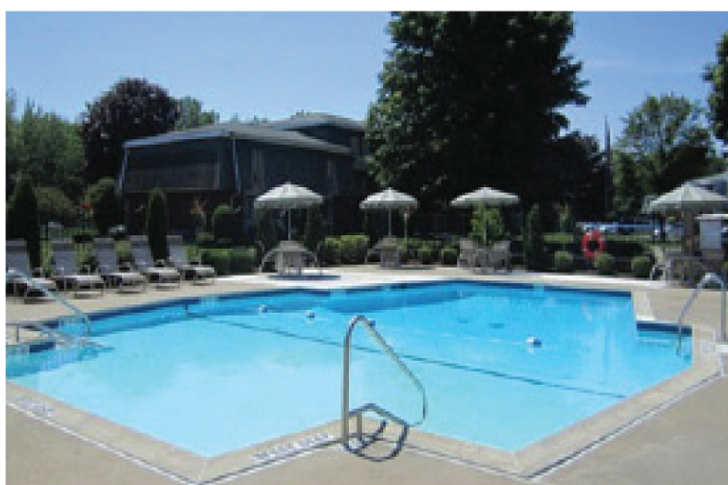
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Cruising the Great Lakes with **VICTORY CRUISE LINES**

KATHY WITT

Tribune News Service

Victory Cruise Lines' Canada and Great Lakes cruises bring adventurers to some of America's most iconic landmarks: the majestic Niagara Falls; Mackinac Island's Grand Hotel with its sweeping rocking chair porch; the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation — itself a repository of iconic Americana, including the Rosa Parks Bus, Lincoln Chair and Kennedy Limousine; the Rock 'n Roll Hall of Fame, where recent inductees like Janet Jackson join rock's legendary luminaries; the Bumpus House.

Wait! What?
Yes, the Bumpus House, the

very one from "A Christmas Story," where Ralphie's "hillbilly neighbors" lived with their "785 smelly hound dogs."

Great Lakes, grand adventure

Voyages aboard the 202-passenger M/V Victory I and II, acquired by American Queen Steamboat Company in early 2019, show off the best of the Great Lakes, with some

visiting all five. For bucket listers wishing to leave a check beside Lakes Ontario, Erie, Huron, Michigan and Superior, this is the cruise for you.

Carved out by glaciers during the ice age, each Great Lake has its own unique charms and intrigues. Dotted with islands, Lake Erie is the Walleye Capital of the World, home to one of the largest freshwater fisheries. Heavily forested Lake Huron has a shoreline that goes forever, white sand beach and massive sinkholes. Migratory birds — loons, ducks, swans, geese — flock to Lake Ontario. Sand dunes

line the shores of Lake Michigan. Largest of the five, Lake Superior has been called the "graveyard of the Great Lakes."

Somewhere in time

Itineraries are filled with famous names like Niagara, as in the falls. The magnificent threesome — Horseshoe, American, Bridal Veil — splash down in both Canada and the U.S. in New York and are closer to one another than one might imagine. In fact, visitors can see and experience both aboard Hornblower catamaran cruises that travel into the nearly blinding mist of each.



The M/V Victory I and M/V Victory II are agile, intimate ships that easily navigate canals and locks, tranquil bays and hidden ports where larger ships dare not go.

KATHY WITT PHOTOS/TNS

(Souvenir red ponchos are provided and, yes, you will get wet.)

Of more recent vintage is the pelvis that provoked parental angst across the country: Elvis "The Pelvis" Presley's legendary hip shimmy had teen girls in a fervor and television censors up in arms. He burst on the music scene in 1956 and his story, along with those of so many other changemakers in the industry — James Brown, Bessie Smith, The Beatles — is told at Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

You've most likely seen the movie 785 times: Victory's call at Cleveland puts fans of the 1983 holiday movie classic, "A Christmas Story," in close proximity to the Christmas Story House, the very one where Ralphie Parker pleaded his case for a Red Rider BB Gun with a compass on the stock. While not a shore tour offered by the cruise line, the house is a quick taxi or Uber ride from where the ship docks. (Just get there for a tour before 3 p.m., which is check-in time for those overnighing in the house.)

The house is decorated just like you remember from the movie. Crawl into the kitchen cabinet where Randy quivered, fearing the Old Man was going to kill Ralphie. Make a phone call on the



Niagara Falls formed when glaciers receded at the end of the last ice age. They are both beautiful and an important source of hydroelectric power.

1940s-era wall unit upstairs. Across the street, see a model of the very same car for which Ralphie helped change a tire. Guests can overnight in this house (accommodates up to six), and, as of late 2018, at the Bumpus House right next door.

A bus, car and chair — such mundane objects yet each captures a moment in time when history was turned on its head. At the Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation, see the bus where

Rosa Parks, an African American woman from Montgomery, Alabama, made a stand for equality; the glossy black limousine wherein a young President Kennedy was gunned down and fell into his wife's lap; a threadbare chair where another president, Abraham Lincoln, had once relaxed while watching a play before also being shot.

Fans of the Jane Seymour/Christopher Reeves romance, "Somewhere In Time," will love the ship's call at Mackinac Is-

land and the Grand Hotel, both key settings for the 1980 movie classic. Victory passengers board horse-drawn carriages for a narrated tour to Fort Mackinac and then onward to the hotel and the world's largest covered front porch, with plenty of time to explore and shop the island.

Small ship splendor

Passengers aboard the M/V Victory I or her sister ship, Victory II, find it hard to resist the lure and lull of the lakes as it voyages smoothly along its itinerary. Scenery, from forested shorelines to the marvel of the locks lifting and lowering vessels to the open seas, is ever-changing and always fascinating.

Relaxing is inevitable, whether it's catching a nap in the elegant lounge, mingling with new friends over complimentary drinks in the tavern, lingering over coastal-inspired dinners in the dining room, dancing to favorite songs or greeting the morning with a gentle stretch on the Sun deck.

The dining room serves up classic epicurean delights — prime rib of beef with creamy horseradish sauce; roasted turkey with stuffing and cranberry sauce; pan-

Please see **CRUISE**, Page 6



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**ABOVE/FAR RIGHT:**

The Maharajah Tea aboard Victory I comprises platters and trays of savories and sweets.

RIGHT: Victory's dining rooms plate classic epicurean delights, such as tender roasted turkey accompanied by dressing, sweet potatoes and roasted carrots.

KATHY WITT PHOTOS/TNS



Cruise

From Page 5

seared red snapper; marinated broiled lobster. More casual fare is served buffet-style at the Grill, spectacular views on the side. Each evening during cocktail hour, a parade of gourmet bites are passed and accompanied by light piano music. On sea days, tables are prepared for themed high tea (Maharajah, British Royal, Viennese), the tiered trays tempting with an array of dainty nibbles.

Onboard, puzzles, cards, bridge tours and books pleasantly help pass away the hours. Live music and lectures are offered that connect to the destination, such as "Songs of the Great Lakes," that culminates in probably the most famous ballad associated with this region — Gordon Lightfoot's "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald," which recalls the 1975 tragedy that gave up 29 men to Lake Superior. At Sault St. Marie, Michigan, visitors can delve into its history during the Valley Camp & Soo Locks Tour.

Four fab Great Lakes moments

■ Smudging ceremony at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation & Museum in Little Current, Ontario.

■ Facial and foot massage at Victory's

Latitude Spa.

■ Lunching at the Grand Hotel's Grand Buffet — an astonishing array of treats.

■ Listening in as award-winning Grand Hotel historian Bob Tagatz shares insights and stories about the hotel — it's nothing short of hilarious.

Plan your travels

To learn more about Victory Cruise Lines, which operates all-inclusive cruises to Canada, the Great Lakes and New England, visit www.victorycruise-lines.com. Cruise fare includes accommodations, gourmet dining, distinguished destination lecturers, a variety of entertainment, shore tours, cocktails, cappuccino and other coffee drinks.

For information about booking overnight accommodations at the Christmas Story House or the Bumpus House, visit www.achristmasstoryhouse.com.

Author and travel and lifestyle writer Kathy Witt feels you should never get to the end of your bucket list; there's just too much to see and do in the world. Email: KathyWitt24@gmail.com; Twitter: @KathyWitt; online at kathywitt.com. Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

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The older you get the more time you spend alone

That can mean more health problems

STACEY BURLING

The Philadelphia Inquirer

As concerns have grown about the dangers of isolation and loneliness in late life, a new study from Pew Research Center finds that Americans spend increasing amounts of time alone as they age, with people in their 70s averaging three hours more alone each day than people in their 40s and 50s.

The study, which analyzed Bureau of Labor Statistics data, looked at waking hours, excluding time spent in personal activi-

ties such as grooming. Average time spent alone increased from 3.5 hours for people younger than 40 to 7 hours and 47 minutes for people 80 and older.

Being alone is not inherently bad. Some people may crave more alone time and find it helps them recharge. But too much time alone, the report says, could be a sign of social isolation, which has been associated with health problems among older people, including heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

Not surprisingly, people older than age 60 who lived by themselves spent almost twice as much time alone — 10.5 hours

— as married people in that age group. About a quarter of people age 60 and older live alone. More than a third of older adults who live alone said they spent all of their time by themselves.

Women, who live longer than men and are more likely to be widowed, spent more time alone than men, particularly after age 70. However, older women were less likely than older men to say they spent all their time alone, possibly because women are more likely to go to church or participate in other activities outside the home.

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