Follow along with us as we cruise onboard our 56' Ocean Yacht.

Somewhere on the Water

Our Great Loop
Thursday, September 4, 2025
South Haven Municipal Marina, MI to St. Joseph, MI

Welcome! Glad to have you here!

Last night was rough. After I went to bed, Mark pulled the round fender balls out of the chain locker and put them in place midship, where Valkyrie's rubrail was banging up against the piling. I had suggested those earlier in the day, but he said they were a pain to get out. I guess he decided it was worth it after all. This morning, the decision was to leave them out until we see what the tie-up at the next marina is going to look like.

We explored South Haven early this morning. The first goal was to see what Lake Michigan's sea state was. Our original intent was to spend a few nights in Saugatuck, as well as here in South Haven before venturing to St. Joseph. Mother Nature changed those plans for us. Predicted 40mph winds are on the horizon for the weekend. South Haven's channel is a west-to-east channel and the incoming west winds, even though we were assured we would be ok here; this marina is not suitable for those conditions. Yesterday's and last night's winds were at 28mph. We got tossed around all night. We had to leave.

The marina's location is perfect for walking to Lake Michigan's shoreline (worth noting; South Haven has nice beaches) and to the downtown district. After walking to the South Pierhead Light to glance at the lake's state, we continued along the Harborwalk to downtown. The Harborwalk is a 3.2-mile pedestrian walkway along Black River from the North Pier to the South Pier. Black River is a short 4.2-mile river that empties into Lake Michigan.

Click the link for a map of Harborwalk:
https://www.michiganwatertrails.org/media/assets/media/harborwalk_walking_path_aerial.pdf

Standing at the entrance of the Black River where it meets Lake Michigan, the South Haven South Pierhead Light is one of South Haven's most beloved landmarks. First lit in 1872 and still operational today, the lighthouse has guided vessels into the harbor for more than 150 years.

The current red tower was built in 1903 and moved to the end of the pier in 1913. Its original elevated catwalk still connects the lighthouse to shore, making it one of only four surviving lighthouse catwalks in Michigan. In 2012, ownership was transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard to the Historical Association of South Haven, which continues to preserve and care for this treasured symbol of the city's maritime heritage.



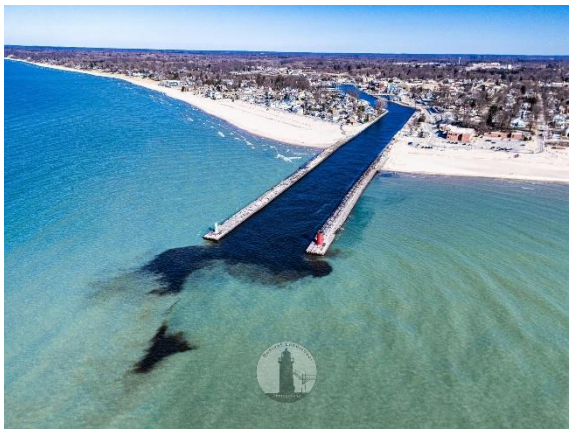


Fun Facts: **Check this out - the Black River on this Facebook Page. They own the copyrights to the photo. It is just one of three on the post.**

1, - Onekama, Michigan

neodSpostrl8fM16g56, rca6ia23fa920gh3lf906051ggi c21551ffmuc ·
Black river in South Haven due to tannins
Titles are generated by AI from Meta
photo by Radiant Landscapes Photography at South Haven.
The river is black from tannins and dead leaves present in the swampland upriver, not pollution,
Radiant Landscapes Photography is in South Haven, MI.
neodSpostrl8fey0g5625rc 6ia2Ffb9,0ga3lf926051ggiru214 1ffmuc ·
I love watching the colors of the lake and river change! Yesterday was a nice sunny day, and it was perfect to show the contrast and water colors.
Explanation:

The river is black from tannins and dead leaves present in the swampland upriver. There is minimal to no agricultural runoff at this time since it hasn't really rained/snowed in a few weeks. It is not black from pollution.
The water near the beach is greenish/blue/tan from the clay banks that exist north of town, and get carried south during a north wind.
The blue water is just good ole Lake Michigan blue 😍
Enjoy and thanks for sharing!
Radiantlandscapesphotography.com





Our walk brought us from the Marina to the South Pierhead Light to Water Street, Phoenix Street, Broadway Street, around to Williams Street. It was early morning, so the shops were either not open yet or in the process of opening their doors for the day. A few coffee shops were busy with customers, and on Center Street we saw the Michigan Theater, an independent, family-owned movie theater with amazing prices. Let's all go to the movies 🎥 🍿

Old Harbor Village on Williams Street was a fun spot to check out. It is modeled after a New England village, so no wonder we loved it!

This collection of shops is modeled after a New England village. As you stroll along the cobblestone walkways, discover unique shops, such as Warner's Tasting Room, the Perfect Setting, or stop by the South Haven Brewpub for a bite to eat! Also located here is the Idler Riverboat and Admiral Jacks tiki bar, two of South Haven's most popular waterfront bars! https://www.southhaven.org/directory/old-harbor-village/



Old Harbor Village



South Haven Marina

The lake this morning had large swells that pushed us around, but so far nothing like yesterday. Mark said that it was recorded as 4-foot waves yesterday, but he swears they were more like 6-foot waves or higher. That has been a topic of discussion many times. It is so hard to determine wave height, and even harder to capture on video.

Measuring wave height:
https://www.weather.gov/dlh/WaveHeightExplanation

Yesterday's seas were starboard bow, aggressive, with breaking whitecaps. Today is a starboard ¼ rolling 3' swell (approx.).

One rather large swell tilted Valkyrie enough that the coffee table slid across the salon floor, my tea kettle tumbled off the counter (yes, it had water in it), and a few minor casualties in the master cabin.
The tea kettle – well, that was a first!

Thankfully the glass coffee carafe stayed in place.

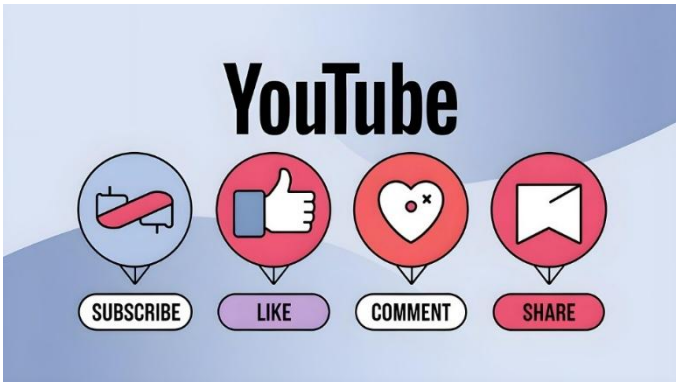
The arrival into St. Joseph was without drama. Once we entered the channel, the water smoothed out, and we were able to turn into the marina with ease. Once we lassoed the lines around the pilings on the T-head, Valkyrie was secured. Although as I walked out to the cockpit to attend to my first-mate duties, new casualties were discovered on the mezzanine. The table flipped over, my chair slid across to the opposite side, and those extra fender balls that Mark stored there for today's journey may have caused this disturbance!

Mark got busy with a chore rather quickly after securing Valkyrie. That, and much more, is coming up in the next update! We will be here in St. Joseph until the storm passes and the lake is calm enough to cruise.

Daily Summary:

Departed from South Haven, MI @ 10:50 am
Arrived at St. Joseph, MI @ 1:04 pm
Days cruised: 69 Days on the loop: 100
Hours traveled: 2 hrs 14 mins
Nautical Miles Traveled: 20.82 (1,591.39 total miles)
Average Speed: 9.1 knots
Weather: Cloudy, windy, 69-72 degrees
Anchorage/mooring/marina review: South Haven Municipal Marina would have rated better, except the west winds made it uncomfortable. Nice staff, good location for walking around town.
#of locks we went through: (73 total locks)

YouTube https://youtu.be/PVprY24JPP4





Time is unrenewable and tomorrow is never promised so do it before you can't.