

# Looking Back on a Great Summer in Upstate Waters



by Pete Bardunias, President/CEO, the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County

Upstate Boaters enjoyed a phenomenal summer, with seasonal temperatures, mostly sunny weekends and reasonable gas prices. Area lakes were buzzing with activity, and the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers featured exciting new amenities for transient and local boaters alike. For those lucky enough to time their voyages



correctly, there were also some great festivals and farmers' markets along the waterways!

Boating services grew on the upstate rivers, as upstate marinas and repair facilities expanded their repertoire. New shoreside bike trails appeared along the Hudson in Schuylerville, and a picnic area accessible by dinghy (and a little creativity) opened on the Mohawk in Clifton Park. Kayak launches and self-contained hubs sprang up in Waterford just above Lock 6, and inland on Round Lake just off Northway Exit 11.

Farmers Markets were easily accessible to boaters, building on a growing trend in recent years. Boaters could walk to the markets in Mechanicville (Mondays), Stillwater (Tuesdays), and Waterford (Sundays) from nearby canal terminals. In fact, the Waterford market is right at the docks! For those who preferred their food cooked, boaters could step off the docks at the Schuyler Yacht Basin and enjoy a meal a few feet away at Clark's Steakhouse, or walk a short distance into the nearby village.

Four large festivals also took place in Waterford: the Waterford Canal Festival (May), Steamboat Meet (July), Dragon Boat Festival (August), and the Tugboat Roundup (September) which drew an audience of over 25,000 combined and showcased various facets of boating to visitors, many of whom had never been in a canal Lock, watched sports such as hydroflight or dragon boating, or been aboard a steamboat, tugboat or the historic (and heroic) fireboat John J. Harvey of 9-11 fame.

Captain Matt Charde of Hudson View River Cruises pulls his tour boat into the docks during a recent Canal Festival in Waterford. Several new tour boats have sprung up in recent years allowing boatless visitors to enjoy the Hudson River. Captain Matt is conveniently located in Troy, and can carry six passengers for hire. In the background of the photo was the 2019 kids' fishing contest presented by the Hudson River Fishermen's Association, and some transient boats headed westbound into the Erie Canal.

For landlubbers, there were great tour boats too. Boats based in Troy, Waterford, and Schuylerville served river interests, and the General Schuyler plied Saratoga Lake offering daytime and dinnertime cruises. One of the tour boats which debuted upstate, the solar-electric Solaris, is now based in Kingston, which makes it easily accessible to the majority of Boating on the Hudson readers in the lower and mid-Hudson Valley. In May, 75 children got to participate in a kids' fishing contest, held at the Waterford Canal Festival by the Hudson River Fishermen's Association and sponsored by Momentive Performance Materials, Scenic Hudson and Mohawk Papers. Each participant also received a \$10 gift certificate to the Wiggly Worm Bait Supply in Burnt Hills.

For more information on upstate boating visit [www.BoatUpstateNY.com](http://www.BoatUpstateNY.com), call (518) 371-3763, visit [www.southernaratoga.org](http://www.southernaratoga.org) or stop by the Southern Saratoga Information Center (at the Exit 9 Rest Area on I-87).

The Village of Stillwater Farmer's Market is an example of the great markets available to boaters just steps from the Hudson River. Quaint, walkable villages await boaters who venture away from the docks to explore the various riverside communities.



The inside of Champlain Canal Lock 5, as viewed from aboard the stern-wheel tour boat Caldwell Belle ([www.mohawkmaidencruises.com](http://www.mohawkmaidencruises.com)) out of Schuylerville.



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The author and his wife recently enjoyed a picnic in the newly-renovated area alongside the Mohawk River in Clifton Park, west of the Kosciuszko ("Twin") Bridges on the right hand side (heading westbound). Gas grills and picnic tables await intrepid boaters who dinghy in to the small kayak launch just a few feet away.