

# Crossing Their Wake

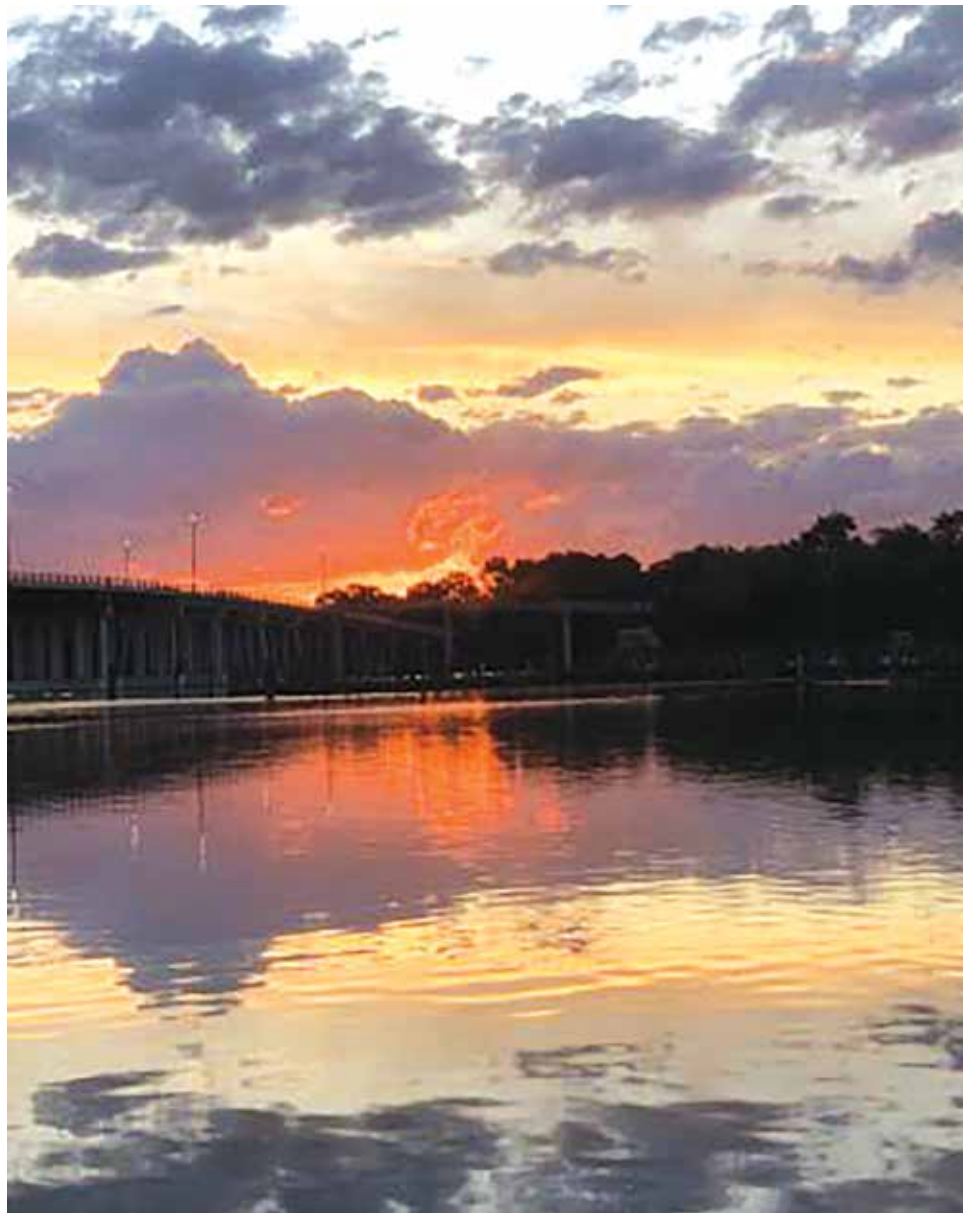
by Peter Goodale

*Editor's Note:* In the last issue of Boating on the Hudson we reported how Peter and Susan Sanchirico of the Peekskill Yacht Club planned and enjoyed their 55 week cruise around America's Great Loop. In Part 2 they share some of the lessons they learned during the 5,700 mile journey along the waterways of the eastern US.

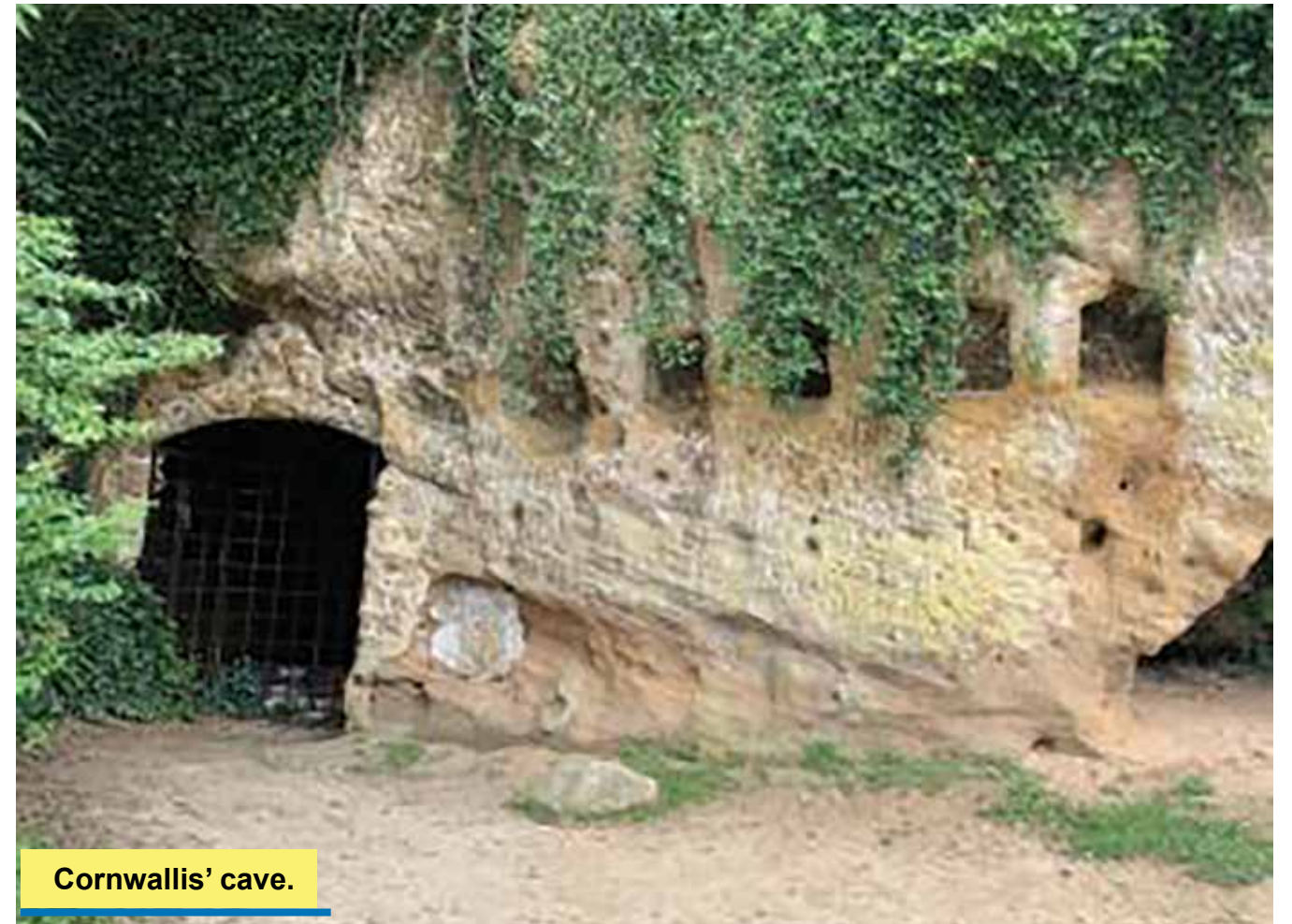
## Part 2

Loopers they say are very close knit and special people; friendly and welcoming; supportive at all times, especially in times of stress; readily volunteering to help in many ways; prone to travel together for safety; and eager to enjoy each other's company. They got their first taste of this culture on their first night underway. Docked in Rondout Creek, they saw a boat flying the white looper burgee and introduced themselves to the owners who invited them to meet with them and three more looper boats for "docktails" (looper lingo for happy hour). "That first night we learned how vital and rewarding it would be to be part of the looper community," said Peter. "I cannot overstate the importance of looper contacts and relationships."

Patience is a helpful character trait in dealing with delays, weather, marina availability and mechanical issues. "Susan is better at this than I am," said Peter. "But I learned to resign myself to delays I had no control over such as on the Illinois River when we had to idle for hours waiting for each lock to open, or the 10 days stuck in Demopolis, AL due to heavy storms. Very frustrating." Susan dealt with such problems



Early morning sunrise, Hampton, Virginia.



Cornwallis' cave.



with a very practical approach. "Have an agenda but not a schedule," she said. "You can make plans for 'when' or 'where' but not both the same time."

Sightseeing along the way was enhanced by the Manatee's top speed of 8 knots. While they occasionally lagged behind faster loopers traveling with them, "you get to see a lot more at 8 mph than you do going faster," said Peter. Susan, in another role as cruise photographer, was able at the slower speed to capture many beautiful scenes along the way and post them on their blog.

"The moment I knew we could make it came on August 10 at 3:00 pm," said Peter. "That's when we successfully completed two test runs of repairs to the engine mount and shaft alignment problems that had plagued us since we left Peekskill. Andrew, the mechanic at Port Sanilac Marina on Lake Huron, was the sixth mechanic who worked on these issues and thankfully the last. His work finally gave us the confidence to complete the loop."

Docktail talk generally focuses on places to go and to avoid, where to dine and not to dine, and lessons learned along the route. According to Susan, they

Custom House 1720.

NEVER talk about religion and politics. “We traveled for more than a week with a couple who are committed Trumpsters and Evangelical Christians, both of which we are certainly not,” she said. “But we had so much more in common that we had a wonderful time with them. In a show of friendship, Peter posed beside a Trump 2020 flag at the stern of their boat.”

Most memorable experiences for Peter included passing by the St. Louis Arch on the Mississippi River and seeing manatees in the wild on the Crystal River in Florida. Visiting the Old Lincoln Courtroom and Museum in Beardstown, Illinois, just off the Illinois River was his greatest thrill. “Lincoln is my favorite president and to walk around the same courtroom in which he practiced law, and to see the original table and chair where he sat was incredible.”

Happy to be home? Susan says “yes” and Peter says he’d rather be out cruising again. “But shorter trips next time.” Their plan is to buy a 27’ or 30’ Ranger Tug they could trailer to locations along the Great Loop they were unable to explore because of Covid-19 closures or bad weather. “We would drop it in the water and live aboard for a week or two,” he said. “It will be great to go where we want to go, not where we have to go.”

And what’s next? With their Great Loop finally completed after all these years, it is time to sell the Answer and move on to their next experiences. Thus restoring the yacht to shipshape condition is a top priority. Three people along the loop expressed interest in buying their Manatee so they will contact them soon to discuss a sale. And buying a truck to haul that new Ranger Tug is on the near horizon.

Having completed the Greet Loop, Pete and Susan are now “gold loopers” and eager to help others still navigating their loops. “We were helped in so many ways during the past year and now want to pay that help forward by volunteering at Half Moon Bay in Croton. It’s a popular looper destination and we know what they need: an assist getting into a slip, a ride to the store for provisions, information about local sights and places to eat and more.”

Clearly, Peter and Susan brought home something just as important as the journey itself. They em-



**Miah Mau: shoal light, lower Delaware Bay.**

braced that special looper spirit of support and caring for each other which they will now share with others. As they wrote on that Great Loop Facebook page, “(cue the cliché) it’s the people!”



**The Betsy.**



**Rock Hall Village.**



**Chesapeake lighthouse.**



**Doziers.**



**Foggy New York skyline.**