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A FAMILY CANAL CRUISE -2021-



Crossing off a Bucket List item, after completing it, is always a very satisfying accomplishment. Our family summer cruise this year was intended to do just that for, Liz and Ron, my younger sister and her husband. They had never experienced what a lovely and enjoyable cruise up through the New York State Barge Canals could be. The canals are officially called the "Barge Canals", but we will just refer to them as "the canals".

They yearned for years for the opportunity to experience such a cruise. So this August my wife, Lee, and I invited them and my other sister, Lorna, to join us on our boat, Grandpa's Wake II, as we ventured up to and through the Champlain Canal to Burlington, VT.

Grandpa's Wake II is classified as a 45 foot Raised Pilothouse (RPH) motor yacht with 3 staterooms, albeit small, and 2 heads also small. Still, there was plenty of room in the saloon and the other open spaces to keep the five of us from bumping

into each other. The "saloon" is the historically correct term for the area of a boat where the crew assembles for food and brotherhood. Grandpa's Wake II has a large open fly bridge and an enclosed pilothouse for inclement weather. We were fortunate in that the weather allowed us to spend most of our trip on the bridge except to get into the AC in the pilothouse during those hot days at the end of that August week.



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"Brian T. Young has been a Licensed Captain for over 30 years, a member of the Cortlandt Yacht Club in Montrose, NY and has been boating on the Hudson and beyond since 1965."



After several family planning meetings and phone calls, we were all set for 9 or 10 days away from our slip at the Cortlandt Yacht Club in Montrose, NY. Breakfasts, lunch, several pre-prepared dinners and Happy Hour munchies were brought aboard and crammed into whatever freezer, cooler or cabinet in which we could find room. We also stored the appropriate cache of Happy Hour liquids for relaxing and "walking the boards".

"Walking the boards" is a favorite activity of ours following a day on the water or touring a destination. Freshening up and then strolling down the docks, cool drink or cocktail in hand, chatting with strangers from other parts of the world and checking out the other boats is always a fun thing to do and can be very entertaining.

By the morning of August 4th, with the boat all fueled and pumped out and all our share of the provisions stored, my sister and brother-in-law arrived with their share of provisions plus a cart or two of their own personal stuff. "You never know what outfits you may need for changes in the weather or dining out." Liz said.

Day 1. We got under way, a little late, but with plenty of time left in the day to get to our first destination, Shady Harbor Marina in New Baltimore, NY. The chart plotter said it was 83 miles to Shady Harbor and about 15 miles south of Albany. We averaged about 20 mph when not slowing to a no-wake speed. There are many reasons to slow to a no-wake speed. In some cases it is required and others it is just plain being considerate. The overall trip the first day took almost six hours, but the weather was beautiful and the ride up through the Hudson Highlands is always a pleasure.

As we left the Cortlandt Yacht Club, anticipating her future adventure, my sister Liz, realized the river has a life of its own. It's an ongoing life with every tide. She knows that's not a revelation to many, but for her, she was drawn into a world, she thought she knew, but realized how naive she was.

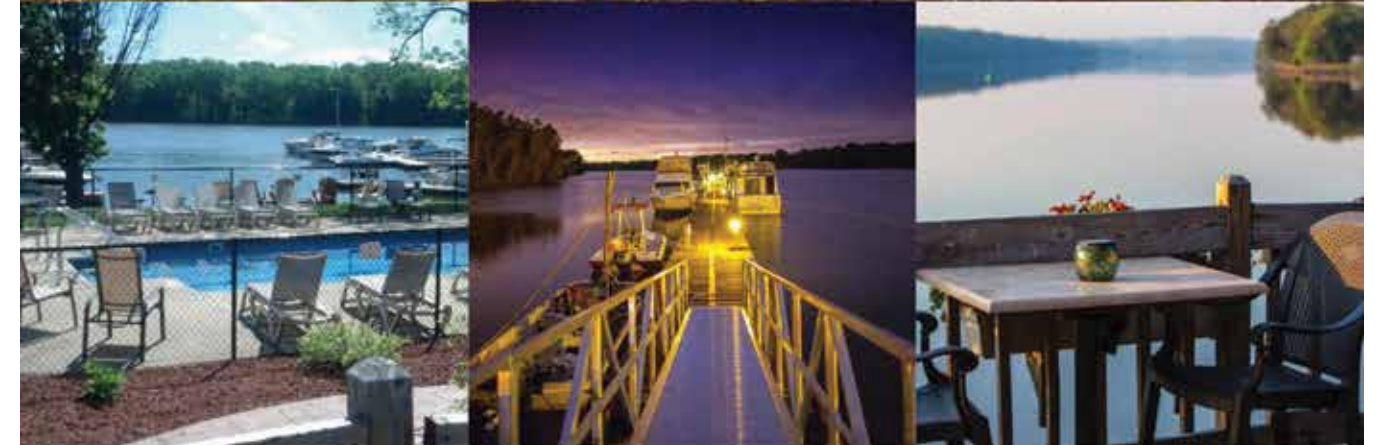
Shady Harbor is a lovely marina right on the river with new, wide floating docks and plenty of electrical power.

There is a very nice restaurant, The Boathouse Grille, on the property as well as a pool and a very clean bath house. After cooling down and freshening up, we had a very satisfying dinner out on the deck of the Grille overlooking the Hudson. Dinner was followed by the five of us doing the obligatory walk on the boards to help with digestion. There was plenty to see and people to chat with, including some "Great Loopers". "Loopers" are folks who have dedicated as much as a year to circumnavigate the eastern half of the US. It is about a 6,000 mile adventure and requires the utmost of patience and curiosity. There is an organization called "America's Great Loop Cruisers' Association" that can provide all things related to cruising the Great Loop. Doing the Great Loop could also be a significant bucket list item. All you need is time, money and a good boat.

Day 2. After breakfast we were off again a little after 9:00 AM. Our next destination was the Schuyler Yacht Basin just south of Lock 5 in the Champlain Canal. On the way, we stopped at the Castleton Boat Club, where my nephew is a member, to pick up his mother, my other sister, Lorna, to complete the crew. Castleton Boat Club, "The Friendliest Club on the River", is about half way between Shady Harbor and Albany. We did a touch and go and were off again heading north. Our family crew was now complete.

In a short while, we reached Troy, NY and ready to enter our first Lock. This lock is called the "Federal Lock" and it actually belongs to the United States Government and is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The southern gates of this lock are actually the head of the tidal waters of the Hudson River. Our bucket list guests, I must say, were thrilled to enter their first lock and experience its ingenuity.

...continued on page 10.



FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS,
Welcome Back to Shady Harbor Marina in 2022

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <p>RELAX
 Enjoy your own island getaway on the Hudson River with our in-ground pool, BBQ area, bocce ball and horseshoe pits.</p> | <p>RECHARGE
 Join old friends and make new ones on the Boathouse Grille's waterfront deck. Refuel and re-provision at our Ship Store.</p> | <p>REPEAT
 There's no doubt you will fall in love with "the island of Shady Harbor" and plan a trip back to the best marina on the Hudson!</p> |
|--|--|---|

Join us for a night, a weekend or the season.

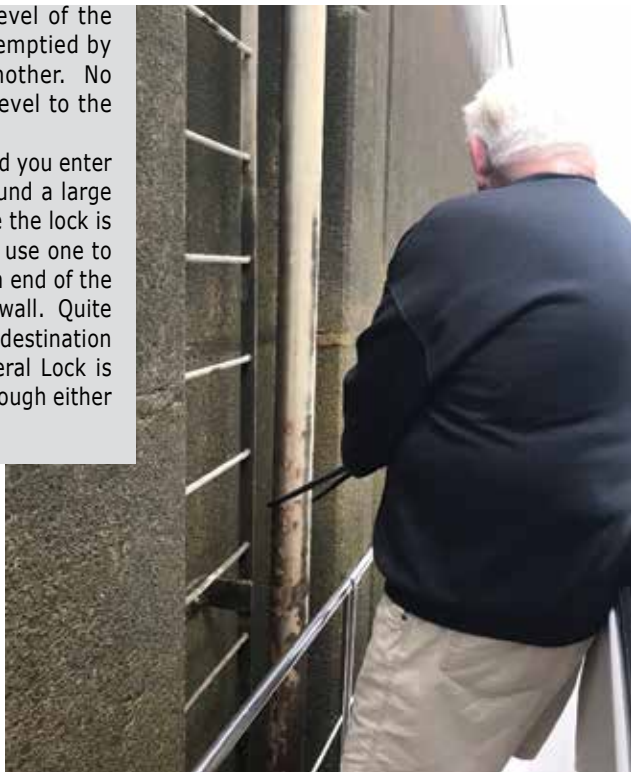
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The purpose of a lock is to raise or lower you to a different level of the river. This is done using a gated chamber which when filled or emptied by gravity, allows your boat to go from one level of the river to another. No pumps are required, only the flowing of water from the higher level to the lower level. Brilliant!

Going north, the lock is emptied, the southern gates are opened and you enter the lock slowly, moving to one side and throwing a line or two around a large pipe recessed into the concrete wall to hold your boat in place while the lock is filled. The large pipes in the walls were so far apart we could only use one to hold on to. As the water flowed in from the higher level at the north end of the lock, the boat gradually floated up until you could see over the lock wall. Quite simple! The lock attendant asked some questions regarding our destination and boat documentation number. I believe, surprisingly, the Federal Lock is the official entry point for boat traffic coming down from Canada through either the Erie or Champlain Canals.



The north gates were then opened and off we went headed for the Town of Waterford which is situated at the junction of the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers. It is also happens to be the junction of the Erie and Champlain Canals. It is the home of the "Waterford Flight" in the Erie Canal, the highest set of lift locks in the world, five in all, one right after the other. We however, headed north on the Hudson River which connects with the Champlain Canal.

Forty five minutes later we arrived at the first of 11 locks in the Champlain Canal. Before entering the canal system, we lowered our radio and TV antennas due to the published limited "air drafts" (heights between the water level and the bottom of the some of the trestles and bridges).

The lock attendant was ready for us and the gates were open. The canal locks differed from the Federal lock in that they had many ropes hanging down for the boaters to grab onto and keep their boat from drifting around the lock. The ropes were close enough so that two lines could be used, one near the stern and one near the bow. My sister Lorna took turns with Liz and Lee tending to the stern lines while my brother-in-law, Ron, tended the forward lines.



We were soon to realize that all the lock attendants were very welcoming and friendly. They were all great ambassadors for the NY Canal system. It only took just over 15 minutes for us to float in, grab a couple of lines, raise up and exit the lock. It was a blast. The lock attendants are well organized and very helpful. The speed limit for most of the canal is 10 MPH. There are a few sections you can run at planning speed and there is one section that has a 5 MPH limit. That, is really slow! Actually just above idle speed for my boat. The purpose of the low speed limits is to protect the shorelines from erosion along the "dug out" sections of the canal and that is very important. The lock attendants will call ahead to your next lock to inform that attendant that you are on your way so he or she can have the lock ready for your entry.



This coordination between locks is much appreciated. Based on the speed limits throughout the canal, the next attendant knows exactly when you should arrive. If you arrive sooner, he knows you have exceeded the speed limit and will generally, keep the gates closed until that time that you should have arrived. The attendant will remind you, in a very polite way that the speed limit must be adhered to.

We continued through Locks 2, 3, and 4 and arrived at our destination for the day, the Schuyler Yacht Basin, at around 4:15 PM. That was a long seven hour day for a crew of retirees, so Happy Hour was quite welcome. This little marina is delightful. Besides being able to host boaters, they also have campgrounds on both the mainland behind the marina and across the channel on a small island. Unfortunately, we elders were a little spent so we ate on the boat instead of taking advantage of the new restaurant on the premises, The Basin Grill. The town of Schuylerville is also delightful and has some very nice restaurants, but we weren't able to take advantage of them due to our schedule.

Docked in front of us was a lovely, older, classic Chris Craft Commander motor yacht that had "New York, NY" as its hailing port on its transom. My wife, Lee, who grew up in Manhattan, struck up a conversation with them, in true "walking the boards" fashion. She was delighted to find out the family was, coincidentally, from her old neighborhood on the East Side Manhattan and the children received their Confirmations in the same church she attended. She really enjoyed chatting with them as well as the nostalgia it brought back.

Day 3 found us transiting the remainder of the locks (Locks 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12) and entering the waters of Lake Champlain. There is no Lock 10, for what I am sure is a very good reason. We continued northward toward our final destination, Lake Champlain, and there by the side of the river were sitting aged, weather beaten homes and barns. Homes once the base for all that lived within. Liz liked to think they had been filled with generations of hardworking, loving families. Each morning they woke up knowing there were tasks that needed to be accomplished just to keep the family going. Starting the morning fire to take the chill of the nighttime air out of the room was a must and hopefully having a hearty breakfast that would last them thru to evening. The father each day hoping that day would be a bountiful day while worrying whether his hard work would be enough to get them through the long winter months. Oh, what tales each home could tell.

The Lock attendant at Lock 9, Wes, was great. We chatted with him and joked around a bit and he handed us a couple of beefsteak tomatoes and a couple of green peppers he had grown near the lock. He promised to give us some watermelon on the return trip but he was off duty when we got back there on our return trip.

After fueling up and pumping out at Whitehall, NY, outside Lock 12, the last lock, we headed into Lake Champlain. Transiting the canal was a blast. We developed into a crack team with my brother in law near the bow and my wife and sisters taking turns at the stern holding the boat in place. But as captain, I remained at the helm and made minor adjustments to keep the boat in place and under control in the lock. As they were tending to their lines in the lock, and out in the heat, I could stay in the air conditioned pilothouse, if so inclined. Rank has its privileges.

According to canal information, the elevation of the Hudson River portion increases from 15 feet above sea level at the entrance to lock C-1, to about 130 feet above sea level at lock C-7, where the canal leaves the natural path of the Hudson River and enters the constructed portion which reaches a peak of 140 feet above sea level between locks C-9 and C-11. The level then drops back down to the level of Lake Champlain at Whitehall, the canal terminus. All in all, the canal lifts you to a peak of 140 feet above sea level from the entrance to the Federal Lock in Troy to the level at C-11 and then drops you back down to about 95 feet above sea level at Lake Champlain. Amazing!

The southern end of Lake Champlain is more like a river than a lake. It takes several miles before the lake begins to open up where you can start to appreciate the beauty of the lake and its surroundings. As Liz gazed at the beauty of the lake, during a moment of contentment and thoughtlessness, only to be awakened by the sudden sight of a fish leaving its world for but a second, as it flew through the air in its attempt to accomplish its task at hand. Whether it be the part of a predator seeking the tasty morsel floating above or perhaps being pursued, wishing only to get away from the possibility of its own demise.

Continuing on, we finally arrived at our third destination, the Chipman Point Marina in Vermont. Lo and behold, docked in front of us, was the very same family on the Chris Craft Commander from New York that we met back at Schuylerville.

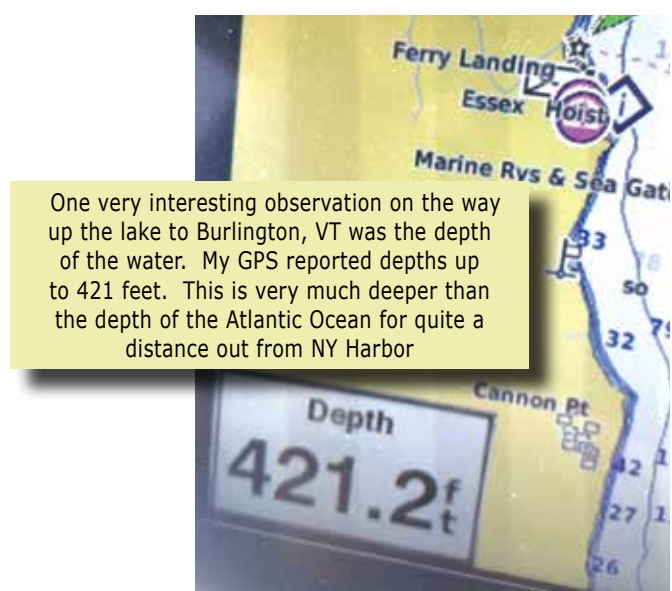


Chipman Point became a vital center of shipping activity in 1812. Sloops and schooners delivered such goods as flour, nails, molasses, iron, rum, and "snuff" to be stored in the two sentinel stone and brick warehouses on the shore. During the 19th century, supplies were distributed by wagon teams from this point throughout Addison County, VT and beyond. A lakeshore settlement grew, including a church, a school, a ferryboat, and a very grand hotel. Over the years, the warehouses (see the photo) accommodated various enterprises such as a general store, a restaurant, a post office and a tavern. For many years, 'hard money was plentiful', and the community prospered. Toward the end of the 1800's, a period of decline occurred. The village shifted its center to its present site and the Chipman River settlement gradually fell into ruin. The warehouses still remain but the rest has passed into history. In 1946, to enhance the newly renovated Chipman Point Inn, a marina was established which catered to yachts and cabin cruisers. Although the inn burned down in 1949, the marina flourished and continues to do so.

The marina is now owned and operated by the Ullorn family, specifically, Pat and her son Chip, who does most of the physical work. Pat's husband Dick passed away in 2010. It was his business philosophy that they still adhere to today. It was the "Old School" way things were done when life was simpler. Everything was done on a hand shake. There were no contracts or rules. Dick would say, "If you know how to behave, then you'll be all right." The marina and its historical buildings have a small town feel with homey pictures, decorations and artifacts from its past on display.

We had dinner on the boat and relaxed in anxious anticipation of seeing the wide open lake and its beautiful mountain surroundings as we were to pass Fort Ticondaroga and beyond the next day.

Day 4. From there we ventured north up the lake to Burlington, VT, about a 50 mile jaunt. The lake was calm and beautiful. Unfortunately, in spite of having a beautiful sunny day, the view of the Adirondacks and Green Mountains was somewhat obscured due to the smoke that was making its way across the US and Canada from all those forest fires out west and in Canada. Still, the view of the mountains was gorgeous.



One very interesting observation on the way up the lake to Burlington, VT was the depth of the water. My GPS reported depths up to 421 feet. This is very much deeper than the depth of the Atlantic Ocean for quite a distance out from NY Harbor



On the way up the lake, we overtook and passed our New York friends who were cruising at a sedate seven knots.



The floating docks are big enough for a golf cart to scurry around and have all the power you need. The restrooms and showers are new, beautiful, air-conditioned, very spacious but a bit of a walk for us because we were tied up at the farthest end dock. There was a number of dock attendants stationed on the docks throughout the day for immediate service and help docking.



We arrived at the Ferry Dock Marina in Burlington at around 1:20 PM and were guided to our location along the far end of the dock. Ferry Dock Marina is a beautiful new, large marina right in the thick of things in Burlington. It is located behind a long breakwater that protects Burlington Harbor from the tempest which can be the Lake at times. There are two little lighthouses, one at each end of the breakwater. There is also an opening in the middle of the breakwater that I would dare not venture through.



About three hours after we arrived at Ferry Dock, in came the New York boat. Now that Lee had become fast friends with the family, she was excited to see them and greeted them with cocktails and cool drinks. They were pleasantly surprised by her thoughtfulness and the opportunity to relax and get settled.

We stayed in Burlington for two days, had some nice meals in downtown restaurants and went to mass on Sunday in a beautiful Cathedral up the hill from the marina. We strolled through "Market Street", a promenade, which is a few blocks long and closed to traffic with shops and eateries from one end to the other. The city was jumping, mostly because we were there on a weekend. It is quite the tourist destination! We tried to get a table on Saturday evening at several restaurants but they were booked until 8:00 o'clock or later. We old folks prefer earlier dining so we kept looking for a place that had tables available at around 5:30 pm. We did manage to find a place called "American Flatbread , Burlington Hearth" It specialized in flatbread pizza, which was surprisingly good.



Day 6. We fueled up and pumped out at the marina on Monday morning for the trip home. Based on our fuel consumption going north, one tank of diesel fuel would get us home with about 80 gallons to spare. We said goodbye to Burlington and headed back to Chipman Point. The wind, however, was blowing out of the south at about 15 mph and the Lake was a bit choppy with water spraying over the bow and up over the bridge windshield while we were cruising at our normal 20 MPH.. We were heading directly into the wind and chop and did so for the entire rest of the trip. The lake is known for its rough conditions, at times, depending on the direction and strength of the wind. The temperature started rising and reached about 95 degrees with the humidity factored in, it was reported to feel like 106.

Along the way there were some interesting landmarks, however. For instance, we passed the Lake Champlain Welcoming Center at Crown Point, NY with its beautiful monument and the Crown Point Bridge, which spans the lake from NY to VT.



We arrived back at Chipman Point Marina around 1:15 PM after a relatively short but interesting day. We had time to freshen up and walk the boards before another dinner on board. We met Pat, the owner, on her golf cart and chatted a bit about the history of the Chipman Point Marina and life on the Lake.

In a previous visit with friends, some years ago, we were interested in going to a restaurant for dinner. We asked Pat then if she could call us a taxi. She said there were none, but take her car and, by the way, there was a very nice Italian restaurant a couple of miles down the road.

We were a little skeptical, after all, how could there be a good Italian restaurant in the middle of nowhere? We took her advice, and her car, and much to our surprise had a really very nice, unexpected, Italian meal, yes, in the middle of no-where.

Pat was the feature story of the April 2015 edition of a local publication, "Business People of Vermont". They penned her "The Lady of the Lake", and she certainly was. She is just a delightful, lovely lady and her son, Chip, who couldn't do enough for you, are truly warm, friendly and accommodating.

Day 7. We left Chipman Point a little after 9:00 the next

morning and headed south to a new venue other than Schuylerville. We were headed for Ft. Edward just around the corner from Lock 7 where the Hudson River separates from the Champlain Canal.

It took about five hours to get to Ft. Edward, passing through the southern narrow end of the lake, Whitehall, Locks 12, 11, 9, 8, and 7, and arriving around 3:00 pm. During a conversation with the Lock attendant at Lock 9, we mentioned that we were surprised to see very few, if any boats locking through. Actually, we only saw one small boat exiting one of the locks during the entire trip. He mentioned that there has been a 60% decrease in canal traffic due to the COVID restrictions, not allowing Canadians to cross the border.

Ft. Edward is a delightful old town with lots of history. Docking is free against a concrete bulkhead with ample cleats and free power stanchions. There is a clean bath house, but you need four quarters to take a shower. The free bulkhead is part of a small park which is clean and maintained very well.

There is a very nice restaurant called The Anvil Inn in town, which my wife and I had been to in the past and enjoyed very much. It was closed when we arrived so we decided to go to the Ye Old Fort Diner across the street from the waterfront. Well, we had a blast there. The patrons were old timers, very outgoing and fun to be with. It was a classic country diner full of friendliness and good home cooking. It was on the other end of the spectrum of the eateries in Burlington. Great fun! The next morning we decided to go back to the diner for breakfast. And, don't you know, with an entirely different group of customers, we had another great time. I ordered "The Big John" breakfast. I probably put on 2 pounds from that meal alone, but it sure was good.

Day 8. We were off again heading for Shady Harbor which has become one of our favorite destinations. We headed south passed Schuylerville, Locks 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 and the Federal Lock at Troy. We were, by this point, a well oiled and crack lock team.

We dropped my sister, Lorna, back off at the Castleton-on-Hudson boat club on our way south, The temperature and humidity were really up there so by the time we got through all the locks and arrived at Shady Harbor we were ready for a cooldown and some refreshing Happy Hour munchies and drinks.

We arrived there about 4:00 PM, tied up, got the full air conditioning going in the boat and, best of all, we went to the pool and enjoyed the most refreshing swim I have had in a very long time.

We arrived there about 4:00 PM, tied up, got the full air conditioning going in the boat and, best of all, we went to the pool and enjoyed the most refreshing swim I have had in a very long time.



This was our last night away so we were practically forced to empty the refrigerator and coolers. We did a pot luck dinner, getting rid of everything we could. We were too spent after this long hot day, so we chose not to walk the boards after dinner.

Day 9. After a good nights sleep in air conditioned splendor and a good breakfast, we bid Shady Harbor goodbye and headed home for the final leg of the cruise. We made it back in five plus hours and were tied up in our slip by 4:00 pm.

All in all it was a great trip. The elders of the Young family got to spend some quality time together and enjoy each other's company, yet again. This time, however, in addition to a great family adventure, my younger sister and brother in law got to cross off a long lasting bucket list line item. We met some great people, enjoyed the beauty of the Hudson River and Lake Champlain and I only put on four pounds. It doesn't get any better than that!

It is the closeness of a family, in these trying times, that gets you through those days that are just so different from those that we grew up in. God bless America!