SEPTEMBER

NEW YORK: THE ERIE CANAL, THE HUDSON RIVER, AND MANHATTAN
We dropped off our friend Duncan in Cleveland, OH and spent a noisy evening anchored next to the airport and the waterfront.
We were treated to an excellent retreat in Ashtabula, OH by Marcy and Lou Hovancsek. We topped it off with a fire on the beach before setting off the next day to have our mast taken down for the Erie Canal.
We navigated more than 40 locks and countless bridges on the Erie Canal. You can see lock 15 at sunrise to the left, and the final lock, number E2, to the right. Notice any hazards in water?
Eyecatching colors and patterns surrounded us as our wake disturbed the tranquil waters of the canal.
After a sweltering few weeks on the sheltered Erie Canal we were relieved to make it to the wide and windy Hudson River! Industry, recreation, and wildlife all coexist on this busy waterway. We passed vessels of all shapes and sizes and learned to navigate the tidal currents. To the right are a handful of invasive water chestnut seeds. They cluster on our submerged ropes like giant menacing burrs.
Chartreuse ribbons of duckweed stripe the Hudson in the fall, adding drama to our classic catamaran trail. On the right we celebrated a beautiful day in a beautiful country! We had a great meeting earlier that morning with Hudson River Keeper about their decades of work to protect and restore the Hudson.
We took a side trip to Piermont Marsh, seen on the left, which has been carefully maintained in order to keep it as a buffer protecting the small town of Piermont from storm surges. Invasive phragmites reeds have choked out most native plants here. Their thick woody stems aren't hospitable to native plants and animals, but may provide an even stronger storm surge buffer than the original marsh would have.
In Yonkers, NY we met up with Groundwork Hudson Valley’s Science Barge, seen on the right. We anchored just a few yards from the barge and could just make out Manhattan in the distance.
The Science Barge grows a variety of crops both hydroponically and aquaponically. Lettuce and basil thrive in the green houses as do these koi fish that feed the aquaponic system with their droppings.
The Science Barge partners with the nearby Center for Urban Renewal at Beczak which is part of Sarah Lawrence College. We admired the waterfront marsh they built and a dried sturgeon tail that was on display. Both organizations focus on educating local residents about the Hudson River in order to build community and awareness of the river’s importance in the region.
Our final meeting took the form of a ride on the Clearwater Sloop, a rare replica of a 1600’s Hudson River Sloop. Clearwater is another group focussed on education though its roots lie in activism. Pete Seeger helped found and fund the organization which takes over 10,000 people out on the Hudson each year. Seeger’s legacy is kept alive through the tradition of playing music during a sail.
The Palisades jut dramatically up from the waters of the Hudson much like the skyscrapers of Manhattan.
We visited P.S. 333, the Manhattan School for Children, on one of our first days in the city. We shared basic climate change science with 7th grade students, an activity about impacts and adaptations, and the story of our Climate Odyssey project. Lucy also visited a 5th and 6th grade art classroom to do a collage activity related to the environment and sense of place.
Zion rows the dingy back to the boat just in time for this incredible American flag sunset over New Jersey.