

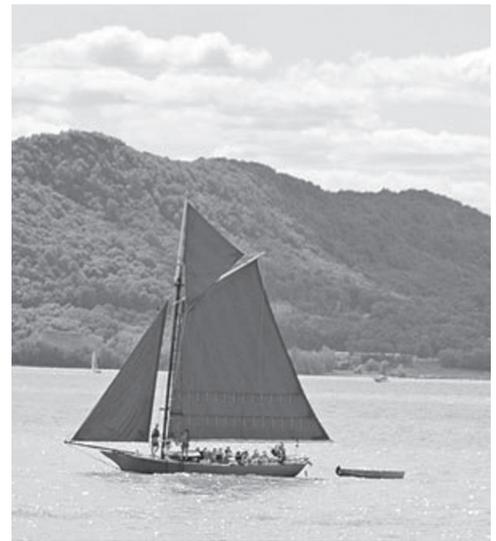
Join the Living River Regatta to Save the Sloop Woody Guthrie

Returning the favor: The boat that taught hundreds how to sail and took over 30,000 out on the Hudson River for free needs a helping hand

by **Gigi Fris**

Remember late last August, 2011? The Hudson River was the color of a Long Island Iced Tea, flush with a swollen parade of fish carcasses, busted docks, and lonely deck chairs, all courtesy of Hurricane Irene. This tangle floated down from the Catskill Mountains, straight out to the mouth of the great Atlantic Ocean. What else were the shifting tides were hiding? Hard to tell, but it was certainly a reminder of the polluted Hudson River waters of yesteryear.

Pete Seeger recalls, "It was around 1960 when I fell in love



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CALLING ALL SAILORS!
To Register your boat for the Regatta,
Or Donate to the Save Our Sloop Fund
Go to woodyguthriecup.org

A Benefit for the Restoration
of the
Ferry Sloop Woody Guthrie



with sailing. Well, I bought a little plastic boat and started trying to learn to sail here on the Hudson, but I looked at the water underneath me and there were lumps of this and that floating past. I thought, "Well, we built a replica of the Mayflower, so why don't we build a replica of a Hudson River Sloop? It will remind people of what a beautiful river it is." He and a couple of friends founded the Beacon Sloop Club, which originally was designed solely to support the sloop Clearwater charter and to clean up the banks of the Hudson around Beacon.

Finally, Pete's dream of cleaning up the river via a volunteer sailing program blossomed in the late 1970's, when he and his wife, Toshi, commissioned a small wooden sloop from a posse of idealistic shipwrights in Saugerties, NY. The result of a winter's worth of work was 46 feet long and christened the Woody Guthrie. Pete named it after his old band mate who penned This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land in keeping with the boat's mission: To promote an interest in sailing and navigation, to promote environmentalism, and to promote free access to the Hudson River.

Volunteer captains and sailors quickly joined forces with Pete by offering environmental sails on the Woody Guthrie

to the local community, and have continued to do so, five nights a week, for 35 years!

Some 30,000 guests and 2,700 free sails later, the Woody Guthrie is now suffering the effects of old age. Her 60 white oak frames are slowly crumbling and cracking. The Beacon Sloop Club, who now owns the boat, has several options: fix the frames, prop her up permanently on blocks somewhere, or risk letting her sink to the bottom of the Hudson.

The overwhelming consensus is to preserve the Woody Guthrie! So BSC members are organizing a yacht race fundraiser for August 25th, in Newburgh Bay, called the Living River Regatta. This is a Hudson River Yacht Racing Association (HRYRA) sanctioned charity event; the winner will receive the Woody Guthrie Cup, which is interesting timing, considering this year is also the centennial of Woody Guthrie's birthday. The race committee will be comprised of members of the Chelsea Yacht Club; it will be a pursuit format race. Free moorings, anchorage and dock space on the Newburgh side are available to boats that sign up early. Awards go to boats raising the most money. Join the fun and sail on Newburgh Bay. Register or donate at woodyguthriecup.org.