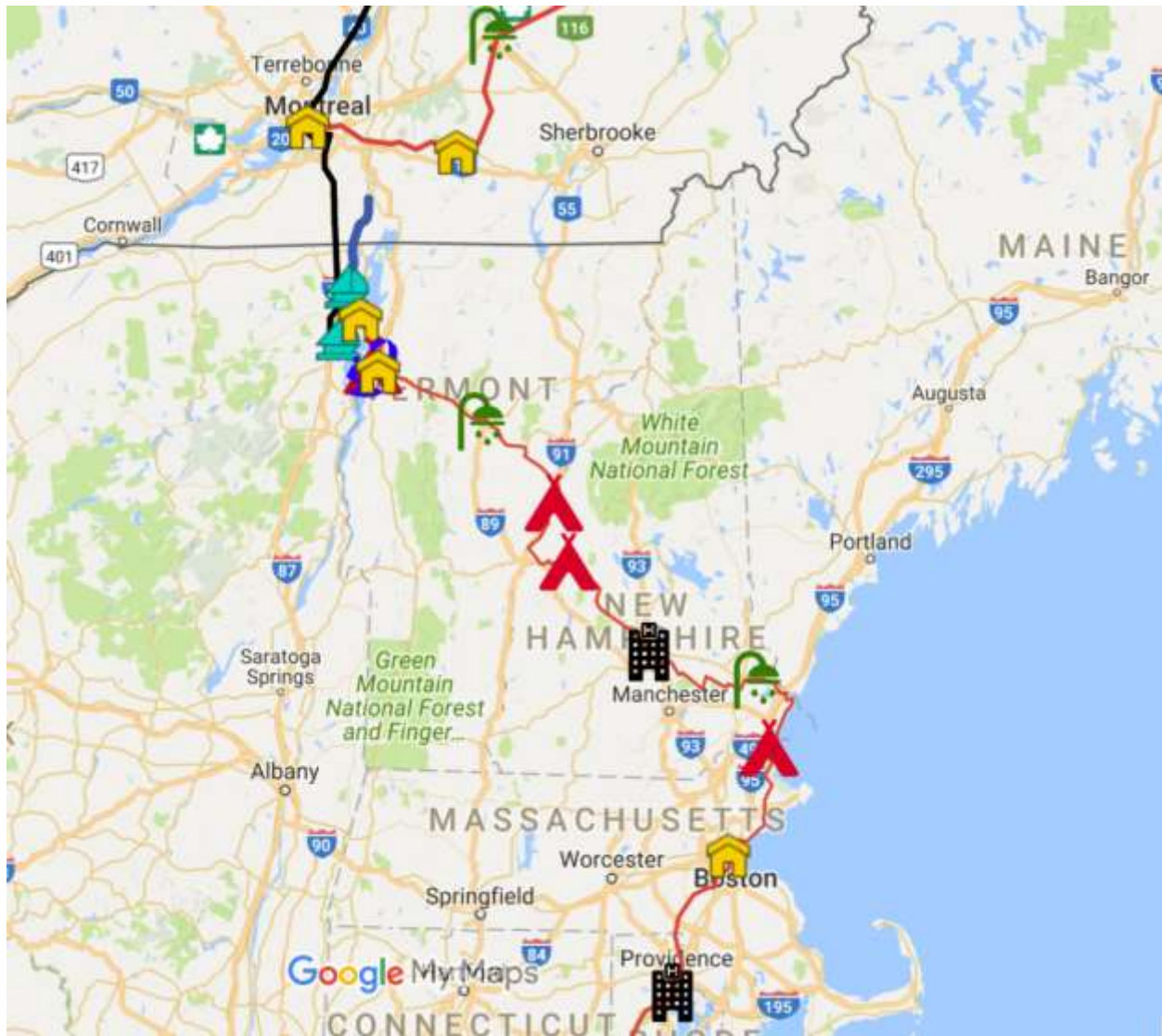


Season 3 – Part 1. Through Vermont and New Hampshire to Boston.



Sa 10.10.2015, day 90. Sailing on Lake Champlain

The sailing trip on Lake Champlain was absolutely magical. The Cardyn brothers were so relaxed and easy going. We made a quick stop in Plattsburgh for fuel and a pump out and went for a short stroll through town. Most of the time on the boat was spent eating or drinking. When night fell, we dropped the anchor in a small bay and passed the evening cooking and eating sauerkraut and sausages washed down with ample quantities of wine.

















Su 11.10.2015, day 91. Good bye to the Cardyn brothers.

We woke up early to the sound of the wind whistling in the rigging. So we hoisted the anchor and made the most of the wind that was blowing exactly up the lake, precisely the direction we were going. We had breakfast under sail. Soon the lake started getting narrower, appearing more like a river. Immediately after a highway bridge, that seemed only just high enough for our mast, we went to clear the Canadian customs. Another first for me, I don't think I ever had to clear customs on a boat.

Just after midday we arrived at the marina where Amanzi would spend winter. We had the rest of the Sauerkraut and piled into Luc's car (Luc is the owner of the boat and he dropped down to help getting it ready for winter) to drive back and collect the Jeep and our bikes. There again Boudouin prepared a nice pick-nick in the back of his Jeep and Jacques took my bike out for a good test ride.

Then finally we headed off saying good bye to these wonderful people. We stopped in Plattsburgh's Dunkin Donuts (will this be our new Tim Hortons?) for internet and headed on towards the ferry. The state park was already closed, but just the other side of the ferry we knew there was a camping called Adult Camping. We hoped it would not be a nudist thing and that it would be still open. We got there, and of course it was very much closed. A pickup pulled up while we were looking round for a place to stay and we started chatting. And up pulls another big black 4x4 and out jumps Andrea. A business woman, cat lover and great person. Without hesitation she invited us round to stay in the guest room of her offices, prepared a basket full of beer, chips, cookies, fresh towels and left us to enjoy the complete building. What trust! It was a lovely evening spent drinking beer and playing guitar. It was just perfect after being with people 24/24 for the last days. Once again a wonderful encounter with a wonderful person!











Mo 12.10.2015, day 92. Burlington.

We got up quite early, so as not to surprise any of Andrea's colleagues as they came to work, left our thank you note and headed off. There seemed to be a beautiful bike trail right into Burlington along an old railway embankment, going right across the bay. Unfortunately there was a gap in the bike trail where there was usually a ferry and of course the ferry was now closed for the season. So we had to go all the way back and ride to Burlington along the highway, which was not too bad with nice scenery and a hard shoulder. We checked in at North Beach camping, beautifully located right on a beach. We spent the day getting nothing much done except buying a new pump for my kite as I had lost the tube for my pump somewhere. In the evening we went for burgers and headed off back to the camping.















Tu 13.10.2015, day 93. Some shopping and an invitation.

We hadn't got much done the day before, so we installed ourselves in Uncommon Grounds café and took turns to go and organize stuff such as lantern for in the tent, a titanium cooking pan, a new silk sleeping bag to replace my torn one, a bag to fit on my bike, etc...

When I got back I found Siria chatting to Lin, a very interesting gentleman, who invited us to spend the night at his place. Another one of those lucky coincidences! We really had no idea where we wanted to spend the night and were actually considering staying at the hostel for 90\$. Finally we headed out of town to the mall for some groceries and some other stuff and had a quick late lunch. We had told Lin we would arrive between 5 and 6 and we headed off late. When we left very dark clouds were rolling in and sure enough, very soon the heavens opened up and completely drenched us. We had a tough time finding the right address, as the downpour made using the i-phone virtually impossible.

We arrived very wet and very late. Lin and Thanh were already having dinner. It felt a bit awkward and we were really sorry we were late, but they were totally cool about it and it ended up being a very nice evening. A bit later the Chinese girl Summer, who was renting a room at their place arrived. She too was a very nice girl who was studying education in her second year. I chatted with Lin about all sorts of interesting things. He's the sort of guy I could talk with for days as he knows all sorts of interesting things about all sorts of interesting things, yet is absolutely not one of those shallow "know-it-alls" one meets so often. Finally after a huge Lasagne and pine apple for dessert and lots of talking we headed for bed.





We 14.10.2015, day 94. A magic encounter with a ski icon of the 70ties.

After a nice breakfast of microwaved egg, coffee, bagels and peanut butter, we said our good-byes to these great people and headed off not quite as early as we had wanted to and without really having an idea of where we were going. So we soon stopped at a Starbucks to make a plan. We quickly decided to head eastwards towards Montpelier as the WarmShower Siria had organized had written back to confirm he would be around. So off we cycled, mostly along the Winooski river. The ride was very nice and most of the way we could avoid the main road and bike on small dirt roads by the river. Then, just as we were having a bio-break a Subaru stopped right in front of us and out jumps a lady and gives us some maple syrup sachets and some maple biscuits. Turns out she is Marilyn Cochran, one of the famous "Skiing Cochrans" and was on the US ski team back in the 60ties and 70ties. Marilyn even won the overall GS competition in 1967 and she showed us the small crystal ball that is awarded. After having watched ski racing so much on TV and having seen these trophies awarded to many of my childhood heros, this was a real magic moment for me to actually hold one in my hand. Marilyn basically stopped just to have a chat, to find out where we were from and encourage us on our further journey. She also mentioned the term "trail angel", these are people that help out hikers on the Appalachian trail. We thought about this term quite a long time, and we realize that we have encountered quite a number of trail angels. Starting with the guy in Osnabrück in Germany who gave us the sight-seeing tour, Harald, who invited us to camp at his national park and also invited us for breakfast, Bernie, who let us camp on his lawn, Rhonda who invited us for strawberries and stories, Wladek and Ewa who invited us to their place, also Lin from Burlington and Andrea who let us stay at her offices. And of course also Boudouin and Jacques, who we have to thank for 3 incredible days sailing. It really makes you think...

The warm shower with Anthony and his daughter Emilia and dog Eva was also very nice indeed. His wife Jill turned up later coming home from her ladies night. We decided to camp in his back-yard, even though he offered us a bed. We said it was so we could head out early the next morning, but this doesn't make much sense. We could have headed off whenever we wanted to also if we slept inside. We talked about this decision for a while. Actually it felt a bit awkward sleeping outside, but probably was the right choice as we heard Emilia screaming and crying as we were cozily falling asleep. Our guess was that they also were more comfortable not having to worry about us being disturbed.

And I have to say, that I find sleeping in the tent absolutely divinely comfortable, my pillow and mattress is great, the sleeping bag wonderfully warm and I really like the atmosphere with the candle burning...





















Th 15.10.2015, day 95. Another encounter with a trail angel

We had some bagels and coffee with Anthony and he offered to ride with us the first part of the way. He knew all the nice quiet backroads and it was a truly magical ride with clear blue sky and wonderfully colored forests. Anthony dropped us off on route 302 and we headed off alone.

We were now really in small town rural USA. Sparsely populated with tiny farming villages. In one such village an elderly gentleman who was just chopping wood called us over, so we went and had a chat. Soon also the local fire brigade captain joined him. Turns out he was the local reverend. He said quite a touching prayer for us. With all this support, even from the heavens above, I really feel that nothing can go wrong! We didn't really know where to spend the night, so at about 4pm we stopped to scrounge a WiFi connection. Weather forecast was not too bad, but cold. We were somehow feeling like a Motel, but there was nothing affordable close by, so we decided to chance it, maybe something would turn up, maybe we would have to pitch our tent in the forest somewhere. To be prepared for any eventuality we toasted some bagels (our camp stove toaster is absolutely fantastic!) and headed off towards Hanover, home of the famous Dartmouth College.

After only a couple of kilometers we spotted a sign for a Camping with closing date 15th of October, exactly today. Support from above? The guy running the camping was very nice indeed and he let us stay for 10\$ and even gave us complimentary fire wood. It was a great night, we went to buy some beers and sat by the fire playing the guitar and generally enjoying some time for ourselves after being at people's homes for the last two days.

It was very cold at night. We lit the candle lantern we had bought in Burlington. This does seem to make a difference, reducing the moisture and increasing the temperature in the tent. Also it makes quite a pleasant light.







Fr 16.10.2015, day 96. Rail trail day.

We slept out next morning and found it hard to crawl out of the warm snug sleeping bags. It was close to 9 when we finally made it out of the tent and the sun was already up and shining. We toasted the rest of our bagels (fantastic toaster!! Best bit of equipment we bought for a long time!!) and headed off towards Hanover. Again we were blessed with very nice weather and also beautiful landscape along the Connecticut River. We cooked spaghetti on the bridge leading into Hanover and then headed downtown. The place certainly was crawling with students. We went to Starbucks for internet. Again finding a place to stay would be a challenge. There was a rail trail heading more or less towards Concord, it was a bit of a detour, but our thinking was that we would probably find a place to pitch our tent in the forest, as we had done in Canada. So off we went. The rail trail was nice, but nowhere near so well maintained as the ones in Canada. We soon realized there would be no nice little pagoda and tables next to which we could pitch our tent. So finally before it got too dark, we simply found a more or less flat spot close to a river and pitched our tent in the middle of the forest. Siria wisely insisted that any food be removed out of the tent, even the potato I had in my backpack. When everything was safely stored in our food box and this moved away to a safe distance, I went back to the tent and found Siria munching a peanut crunchy bar. The smell of peanuts was overpowering! More than enough to lure any hungry bear in our direction. So much for our precautions. However we were anyway far too close to the road and to civilization for there to be much danger of bears and so we spent a quiet night and fell to sleep around 8 pm.



Sa 17.10.2015, day 97. Towards Concord.

As expected, I was kicked out of bed very early by Siria, anxious to get us on the road before anyone saw us. And so we were all packed up and on the road at about 7:30. It was freezing cold, below zero, and soon both hands and feet were numb with cold. After about 10km we stopped to make our Müsli. There was a very busy diner close by and we dropped in to try and get warm. We had eggs with toast for 2.5\$ and coffee as second breakfast. We really have good appetites! We biked all day, stopping quite often to put on rain gear as there were squalls of rain, or taking rain gear off again as we panted up some short steep hills and once for cookies and coffee. We made good progress, covering over 80 km and finally got to the outskirts of Concord. Time to find a place to spend the night. We were really feeling like a Motel to have a shower and to stay in out of the cold. The forecast for the night was a chilly -2°C. Internet was found in McDonalds and the search revealed that the cheapest place to stay would knock us back 120\$. However, the search also revealed that there was a Motel right next to where we were sitting, but with no on-line reservation or prices. So we decided to go and have a look. The place was fine and only 55\$. The rest of the day was spent catching up on our blog, e-mails, and planning the next day's trip, a nice pizza and not quite managing to do the laundry.





Su 18.10.2105, day 98. Warm shower in the University Town of Durham.

We really enjoyed the warmth and comfort of the Motel on this cold morning. First thing was doing the laundry while internetting in Dunkin Donuts. DD is actually a really really nasty place. The coffee is terrible and the donuts even worse. Even the Bagels are terrible. I miss Tim Hortons!! But there is internet at least.

We finally got on the road down to Concord, which is not really anything special and then on to a mall to do some shopping. Finally, we were heading off towards our destination in Durham. The road we had chosen was really scenic passing through Bear Point State Park. However, it was also very tough riding with very steep hills and almost no flat road whatsoever. We climbed over 1000 m altitude that day, even though the highest hill was only 250 m.

We stopped briefly to toast some bagels and arrived at our Warmshower host Brent Bell around 6pm. He took us out to the university dining hall and casually asked us if it would be OK for us to come to his class and talk about our adventure. This sounded very interesting, and even though I was a bit apprehensive of course we said yes! The food was really delicious and all you can eat. Unfortunately I spent too much time talking and didn't really get down to knocking as much back as I would have wanted to. Back at his place we watched the ball game, New England Patriots (his team) against Indiana. It was a heated affair due to last year's Deflate-Gate when Indiana accused the Patriots of using balls with too little air pressure.



















Mo 19.10.2015, day 99. Lecture at the University of New Hampshire

We got, had breakfast and headed out with Brent to his office. At 8AM there was a meeting with his 3 teaching assistants to prepare the class. Basically it was agreed that we should show up with our packed up bikes and tell our story. The general topic being taking a risk, a social risk that is, so stepping out of the norms of society and paving your own path. So we went back to his place to pack our bikes, watched the movie *Asiemuth* by two Quebecois and then went to class. Students in the USA are certainly far younger than in Switzerland, for me it felt more like high school than college. I was quite nervous and think I could have done a better job, but in all it was an absolutely great experience. It also made me think about what I am looking for and what this trip means to me. And also about what will come after the trip when I will have to get back into “normal” society.

We then said our goodbyes and were waved off by a cheerful bunch of students towards Portsmouth. There we stopped down at the port to cook spaghetti and then we biked on. The coast is where all the rich people seem to live. There were huge houses surrounded by huge immaculate lawns and gardens. And from time to time nice beaches. We still had quite a distance to cover to get to Boston and time was getting on. Soon it was getting dark. Siria had a camping in her mind that was still open, so we went there. The receptionist was a sour old cucumber and the camping knocked us back 34\$ for a parking lot to pitch our tent with not a single blade of grass. And we even had to pay for the shower on top of that. In my opinion is, we should definitively rough it more. There would have been good spots on the way. On the other hand, a camping is much more relaxing as we do not have to care about being spotted.





Tu 20.10.2015, day 100. Boston and 100 days on the road!!

We had been invited to stay in Boston with Guillaume and Melanie, old friends of mine from my Montréal days. The ride into Boston was quite unpleasant with lots of traffic and traffic lights and highway crossing and bridges without bike lane, etc... The road network is certainly made for cars and not for bikes. Also I chose to use a road along the coast. It looked nice on the map, however it turned out to be really bad and resulted in us taking quite a detour. But finally we made it to Guillaume's place. Melanie unfortunately was out on a business trip. He gave us a fantastic reception, put us up in a nice room with fresh towels, freshly made bed, WiFi password and gave us the keys so we could come and go as we please. We went down to an Asian place for dinner and some beers. It was delicious!







We 21.10.2015, day 101. Administrative day in Boston.

We had a bit of breakfast and then headed out on foot to find a place to sit down and plan our further trip, catch up on e-mails etc... It took us quite a long time to find a place with WiFi and plug points. In fact we walked almost all the way to downtown Boston before we found a hotel lobby where we installed ourselves for a couple of hours. And that was basically all we did, apart from some small excursions to collect food (some chicken, lentils and rice, chocolate, etc...). We went home to prepare a salad to have with Guillaume. It was a nice evening looking at pictures of some of the adventures Guillaume and I shared back when I was at CRCT. Amazing how much we did and how much I have forgotten. It brought back nice memories.







Th 22.10.2015, day 102. Another long day in Boston

Today Guillaume had a long day at work as he was running an experiment. We decided to head off to Boston for some tourism. We somehow got away very late, in fact it was almost evening before we really set off. We did a bit of the freedom trail and generally had a relaxing day. Highlight was watching a band from the back as they played to a crowd in a pub. Very interesting perspective and a great band. Guillaume was home when we got back. We stayed up a while playing "6 Nimmt" and having from rum and ginger ale.





Fr 23.10.2015, day 103. Last day in Boston

Late morning we headed out to have a look at Harvard. We cooked a soup for lunch and then again somehow spent forever before heading out. We went separate ways. I headed off to see USS Constitution, she was unfortunately under reconstruction so very little to see. For evening meal we decided against eating out and for a steak cooked at home. We went shopping together and bought 3 huge steaks and other goodies. It ended up being a wonderful feast. We started off with lots of blue nachos and vegetable chips with guacamole. Everything was washed down with ample quantities of hard cider and beer. My steak was about 1 kg, with potatoes, asparagus and mushroom sauce. Delicious! Pineapple made a perfect desert. Apparently pineapple contains an enzyme that helps digestion. I believe it must be true, as after some Wii playing (Guitar Hero and Mario Kart) we managed to down some ice cream.

They were 3 great days in Boston and Guillaume was absolutely fantastic. It really felt good to spend some days in a real home, with cooker, coffee machine, bed, table and chairs. It was like a holiday from our holidays and a couple of days of absolutely stress free relaxing. We really owe a huge Thank You to Guillaume and I really hope I will get to see him and Melanie again somewhere...

