

Saorsa II — 2010 Cruise

Part 002

2010-05-26 06:28 EDT (10:28 Z)

Yesterday, we docked in Le Port de plaisance de Longueuil after exiting the St. Lawrence Seaway. We are on our way to the sea.

Our transit of the Seaway was uneventful although we sometimes found the lock procedures a tad confusing. Mostly things were done in a standard manner, but each lock seemed to have its own little idiosyncrasies. That said, our transit of the Seaway became somewhat boring after the first couple of locks and the novelty had worn off.

We have spent the two previous nights at anchor which was a welcome change from marina docks and fees. Today, we will fill our water tanks, put the dinghy back in the water, and head downriver toward Sorel.

2010-05-26 12:40 EDT (16:40 Z)

What I fear most on this cruise?

It is not other vessels, nor the sea, nor wind, nor fog. My greatest fear comes from inside. It is that when all is done, I will not enjoy the cruise. I live with that now.

This morning, we did our chores and headed out of the marina. The latter, Le Port de plaisance de Longueuil, was an indifferent place to dock for a night. The facilities were certainly nothing special and the walk from our berth to the showers was long. An expensive dock and very expensive diesel. All of 27 litres cost us almost \$40. Good to be away from the place.

We've motored out of Montreal past a very busy commercial port with several ships loading and discharging cargo, mostly containers.

We're now away from the city and approaching Contrecoeur. The channel is well marked but narrow. With a favourable wind, one might sail. But today, there is no wind, so we run the engine and burn some of that expensive diesel fuel.

We've identified what appears to be a good anchorage just a little way downstream from Sorel. The cruising guide mentions it as well. We will give it a try and see how we get on.

Although we're both growing weary of the engine's drone, we are making good progress in terms of miles under the keel. Along with the river current, we are making seven knots, sometimes as much as eight.

What to do?

2010-05-29 11:15 EDT (15:15 Z)

Last night, we stayed at Trois Rivieres Marina. An OK spot to spend the night if you don't mind being neighbours with a pulp and paper processing plant. The noise and smell were unpleasant and continuous.

We're now in tidal waters. Our departure this morning was timed to allow us to make the best use of the tidal ebb current on our way down river. We left the dock at exactly eight hours before low tide in Québec City.

The anchorage we found downstream of Sorel was lovely. The entrance was a bit difficult, narrow and shallow. The holding was excellent and the anchorage peaceful. Other than a few folk angling from small boats, we were the only vessel in the anchorage. Most of the time, the loudest sounds were the many different calls from the abundance of bird life.



Illustration 1: Anchorage, Isle de Grace

Again today, we're running under engine. If all works out, we will make Québec City tonight. If the currents don't work for us, we'll stop about half way there in a small town called Portneuf.

2010-05-29 17:36 EDT (21:36 Z)

At Portneuf marina. A nice spot really. Starting with the VHF R/T interchange during our approach, the assistance with docking, the relatively inexpensive fees, the friendly neighbours. The town even has pizza delivery to the boat from the local pizza place.

Our efforts to reach Québec City today were in vain. In spite of leaving Trois-Rivieres at the time suggested

in the cruising guide, we realised on reaching Portneuf that we would be unable to reach Québec City at the right state of the tide. The alternative was to dock here at Portneuf which is half way between Trois-Riviers and Québec City.

Sitting in the cockpit just now sipping a glass of red from a bottle purchased earlier today at the local Depanneur. It's a delightfully pleasant evening. A mostly clear sky, bit of wind from the west, a small gathering on the boat a few slips over.

I so wish I could find peace and contentment. It's an elusive goal that has frustrated me most of my life. Even now, at the start of a dream cruise, the adventure of a lifetime, I feel something is missing. Why is that?

The boat, my Mistress, has assumed the air of a serious cruiser. The unmistakable message is one of "here is a voyaging vessel". Mud from the last anchorage clings to the anchor on the bow, the sails roughly furled, a towel hangs drying on the dodger frame. Here is a boat of purposeful effort.

2010-05-30 08:52 EDT (12:52 Z)

A bit of concern and frustration last night. While falling asleep, I heard an unusual sound. The cooling water pump for the refrigeration system had stopped working the the refrigeration unit was overheating as it cycled trying to cool the fridge. I shut down the system and had a fitful night's sleep.

This morning, a basic problem determination exercise showed the issue was with the pump motor. The electrical feed, and solenoid control switch were fine as was the water feed.

After re-assembling the components, one last attempt to energise the system had the pump come back to life. I immediately set the fridge to its coldest setting and allowed the system to run continuously for about ninety minutes. At the moment, it has cycled off. We will see if it restarts.

Regardless, I will purchase a replacement pump when we reach Québec City.

We're now waiting in Portneuf for the tide to turn. We plan to leave Portneuf about 11:00 EDT and head for Québec City. The tidal currents are such that we must pass the Pont de Québec just west of the city at about 16:30 EDT.

The forecast today has a strong wind warning in it (insert big grin here) and it is a very favourable westerly. We may be able to sail to Québec City after all.

Aha, the refrigeration system just started an on cycle and the cooling water pump is running. Good news.

The wind is beginning to freshen. I can hear it in the rigging now and my Mistress is tugging at her lines, eager to be on her way. Soon, my Beauty, but patience for now.

End of Part 002.