

# Situation Report 008; 2012-09-02

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After leaving Portland, we sailed “Down East” to Maine and stopped at Snow Island, Five Islands, and Tenants Harbour before reaching Rockland. The scenery is magnificent, the lobster pots a plentiful hazard to navigation, the fog thick, and the people quite delightful.

Cindy, “The Crew”, had her first experiences in sailing through fog. As she has observed, the two minute interval between fog-horn signals can seem like an eternity when visibility is measured in feet.

In Rockland, I reconnected with Rebekah and Tim W. as well as their children Fran and Paul. It was a high point of the cruise and as before they were consummate hosts. We managed to fit in a delightful visit to their home as well as a “cruise in company” with Tim and his Labradoodle “Wilson”. The latter brought new meaning to the phrase “Salty Dog”.

With Tim leading the way, we sailed out of Rockland towards the west shore of Vinalhaven Island and Hurricane Sound. There we spent three days enjoying the rugged scenery and peaceful anchorages. We were privileged to receive a personal tour of Hurricane Island from Tim as he has spent much time there as a volunteer with Outward Bound and now with the Hurricane Island Foundation.

On returning to Rockland Harbour, we dropped anchor in the harbour with the intention of provisioning and moving on. Thick fog and attractions on shore kept us in Rockland for another few days. During that time, we attended a boat show, enjoyed the local sights, had the valves adjusted on the ship’s engine, and re-provisioned.

When enjoying a pint at “The Pearl” restaurant in Rockland, Cindy struck up a conversation with the barman who, it turned out, was Jimmy the restaurant’s owner. One thing led to another, and Cindy went out for an afternoon sail with Jimmy et al. on his boat. This gave me an opportunity to single-hand *Saorsa II* away from the dock and enjoy an afternoon sail alone with Her before returning to anchor (under sail, naturally) in the harbour.

If you are ever in Rockland, Maine, be sure to visit The Pearl and order the clam chowder. It’s simply awesome.

Rockland was our turn around point. On leaving that place, we turned and headed back south.

Our first stop was in Damariscove Harbour on Damariscove Island. I had stopped in this spot on my 2010 cruise and it is well worth a visit. The harbour is narrow, tiny, shallow, and a serious challenge for a deep-draft yacht. We set the main anchor and then I rowed out a stern anchor to hold us secure. As the island is a preserve, it was a very quiet evening.

Then, on to another favourite anchorage in the lee of Richmond Island near Cape Elizabeth where we again managed to pull off a nice manoeuvre under sail and anchored without resorting to the engine. We did the same when we departed a few days later and sailed off without use of the engine. I like to think Mike B. would have approved.

Then on to York Harbour where we picked up a town mooring. We walked into the historic town and were surprised to find we had stumbled into the local volunteer fire brigade’s field day with competitors from a few other towns in the area. Sitting down at the side of the main street, we were assailed with multiple sirens as fire trucks paraded through the town.

From York, we sailed around the outside of Cape Ann and used a free guest mooring behind Great Misery Island just a few miles from Salem, Massachusetts. Then, on into Salem Harbour the next day where we picked up a mooring for Hawthorne Cove Marina.

A few days exploring the town of Salem were pleasant and educational. To my delight, the Peabody Essex museum was having a special show of Ansel Adams' photographs. We took the guided tour and stood in silent awe of this great artist and pioneer of his medium.

After leaving Salem, on to Scituate where we re-provisioned, filled propane tank, and re-fueled. Then followed a long day sailing south into Cape Cod Bay and transiting the Cape Cod Canal before dropping anchor in Onset harbour.

From Onset, we made a return visit to Block Island where we anchored in the Great Salt Pond and stumbled into a schooner rendez-vous. Quite a magnificent sight. Then we moved on to Mystic Seaport which is, as always, a wonderful experience.

As I write this, we are anchored at the east end of Long Island behind Long Beach near Orient Point. Soon, we will continue our way through Long Island Sound, the East River, and return again to New York City before heading up the Hudson towards home.

## Some stuff that has worked:

**Scituate.** Yes, it's odd to list a "town" as something that worked. But... for the cruising yachtsman, this town is very near a perfect stop for all of those things which are so very important. The moorings are relatively inexpensive at \$35 per night and include launch service to and from the boat as well as the usual trash disposal and showers. In addition, a very well stocked grocery store, liquor store, propane filling station, Laundromat, and pharmacy are just a short walk from the town dock. Be sure to hail "E-Z Rider" launch on arrival and ask for a transient mooring.

**iPhone.** Well, not really the phone itself as it's just a platform. But ... the in-built functionality of this device and some of the apps which have become available are an absolute boon for the cruising yachtsman. Of course, using it as a camera, e-Mail device, on-line banking service, and web browser are very convenient. However, the *AyeTides* app which will allow one to know the state of tide at a multitude of tidal stations is incredibly handy. The *YachtWeather* app has proven to be very accurate. The *DragQueen* anchor alarm app is a low power consumption function providing great piece of mind. The *Plan2Nav* chart plotter app actually saved our hides one very foggy afternoon when we were taking the dinghy from the anchorage to the town dock in Tenants Harbour. The *Twitter* app has allowed me to send out short notes which, I hope, have somewhat compensated for my lack of communications. Oh, and mine is encased in a waterproof *Lifeproof* case... well worth the investment.

**Oakley Sunglasses.** Good eye protection is a must for the cruising yachtsman. These are awesome.

**Automatic Identification System (AIS).** When combined with a good display device such as Vesper Marine's AIS WatchMate, this technology is mind boggling. I wouldn't leave port without it. I use a Furuno FA-50 transponder which has been rock solid.

**Digital Selective Calling (DSC).** A tremendously useful enhancement to standard Very High Frequency Radio-telephone (VHF-RT) communications. The fact that it is seldom used continues to puzzle and frustrate me. The slow pace of its adoption makes no sense at all. On this cruise, we used it during our cruise with Tim W. and it was a great boon.

## And, some stuff that didn't.

**Danford's Marina in Port Jefferson.** The worst value and poorest service I have ever experienced. Avoid it!!!