

Saorsa II – 2013 Cruise

SitRep 002

Well, it's been a wee bit more than two months since my last Situation Report (SitRep). Rest assured I have not been idle during that time.

The house has been sold and most of my possessions have now been moved to storage. A few more items and my shore-side life will be put away and on hold for a while.

There's been a lot of work going on in terms of preparing *Saorsa II* for this next cruise. All the usual lay-up maintenance activities plus the addition of a number of new items have kept me remarkably busy. A few of the more significant items follow.

Saorsa II has been fitted with a Furuno NavTex (Navigational Telex) receiver model NX-300. The unit is now functional, but has not yet been fully tested. This must wait until She's commissioned and within range of a NavTex transmitter. During the cruise, I'll report on the unit's function and usefulness (or lack thereof).

Two new potable-water tanks were fabricated of stainless steel and have been installed. This turned into a much larger and more difficult project than I had imagined. The new tanks were based on an original 1986 Hinterhoeller [drawing](#) of Niagara 35 standard tanks and fabricated to those specifications. Sadly, they would not fit in the space on board and needed subsequent modification. I suspect that something was altered between 1979, i.e., the year *Saorsa II* was built, and 1986.

In addition, the size of plumbing differed from that originally installed. Suffice to say, these small but crucial differences made the task of fitting and connecting the tanks much more difficult and time consuming than anticipated.

A new rudder has been fabricated and will be installed in the next few days. This was in response to damage sustained during a grounding in the last few days of the 2012 cruise. While entering Point Breeze / Oak Orchard on Lake Ontario, we ran aground on rock in mid-channel. The extraordinarily low water levels on the lake at that time were a contributing factor. It was a most disconcerting experience, to say the least. We were able to extricate ourselves from the situation, but the rudder stock was bent in the process.

The new rudder was built by Ken at [Wiggers' Custom Yachts](#) in Bowmanville. It is extraordinarily well constructed and immensely strong; the words "bullet proof" have been mentioned. Really good characteristics for a spade rudder design.

Launch has been scheduled for May 7. Following initial commissioning at Wiggers, *Saorsa II* will sail to [Port Whitby Marina](#) for final fitting out, sea trials, and provisioning before departure at dawn on May 30.

Andy, "The Sailmaker", believes he has discovered the source of the problems we had with the new mainsail during the 2012 cruise. This new sail was cut smaller than the original design specifically to deal with the stronger winds found on the Atlantic. Last year, problems with the slides which attach the sail to the mast rendered the sail unusable. We'll have another go with it this year and see if Andy has worked his usual magic with cloth and needle.



The folk at [Sportech Sails](#) have repaired *Saorsa II's* canvas dodger (an unfair lead of the roller furling line caused a bit of wear) and fabricated a new bimini awning for *Saorsa II*. The former is always welcome weather protection; the latter will do much to make the Bahamian sun more tolerable.

And, just to make the cockpit a little more private and provide a bit more weather protection, I've made cockpit lee cloths which will be fitted to the guard rails when needed. Rather nice to confirm that I can still work a sewing machine.

I'm very fortunate in that two hardy and enthusiastic individuals have volunteered to act as crew during the first leg of the cruise. I will be joined on board by Jason S. and Cindy H.

Jason is a fellow member of the Royal Canadian Military Institute ([RCMI](#)) and is a most enthusiastic adventurer. Although he has limited sailing experience, his strength, tenacity, and good humour will do much to contribute to the success of the cruise.

For those who followed my cruise in 2012, you will remember Cindy, "The Crew", who was on board for that adventure. Although she has an aversion to the cold weather we will inevitably encounter on this cruise, she has volunteered to join the boat again. Her skill handling ground tackle on the foredeck when anchoring will again be welcome.

In addition, Lynn M. has expressed an interest in joining the boat for the Bahamas portion of the cruise. I encountered Lynn via the "[find a Crew](#)" web site; although we've never met, she possesses the characteristics of a prudent mariner and good shipmate. More to follow on that front.

There continue to be crewing opportunities available for various portions of this cruise. One such is the leg of the cruise from Halifax, Nova Scotia to Boston, Massachusetts. This will require a minimum one month commitment from early August until early September. The reward will be cruising through the epicentres of Canadian and American maritime history along some of the most spectacular and challenging coastline to be found.

I encourage all who are of good moral fibre, strong back, and adventuresome spirit to contact me directly if interested.

In return, you'll find adventure, hardship, good food, strong drink, and wonderful memories.

Yours aye, Bill

(Captain Zaphod)

