

# Saorsa II – 2013 Cruise

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## SitRep 006

Oh ... My!

Docked here at Deep Point Marina in Southport, North Carolina, I was feeling a bit sorry for myself that when I depart tomorrow morning I'll be on deck in temperatures just a little above freezing. Then I saw photos that Jason S. (crew in the first few days of this cruise) posted on Facebook of the snow in London, Ontario. I now have a deeply internalised understanding of the phrase and book title *Sailing away from Winter*.

*Saorsa II* has put a few more sea miles beneath Her keel since my last report. A few days ago, She passed the 3,000 nautical mile mark of this cruise.

From New York City, we sailed to Barnegat Bay stopping briefly behind Sandy Hook on the way. On entering the Manasquan Inlet and River, we saw the legacy of Hurricane Sandy from a year earlier. A tremendous amount of clean-up work had been done, but the damage still evident was stunning. Entire houses toppled over into the water.

Traversing Barnegat Bay with its convoluted channel and many shoals was a heart-stopping few hours. We quickly tired of the constant din of the shallow water alarm on our way to De Rouville's Boat Yard on the Toms River in New Jersey.

Once at De Rouville's, I re-connected with Ingrid C. and Dayton T. whom I had first met in New York City on my 2010 cruise. One of the true delights of the cruising life is these connections with like-minded souls.

Bill De Rouville and his team were immensely helpful and supportive. It was at his yard that I planned to effect complete repairs to the damaged engine mounts left over from Rockland, Maine. Engine mounts were replaced with new, some worn hoses identified and renewed, lubricating oil changed, and engine realigned with the stern gear. The repairs went very well and all is now running smoothly again.

For a little perspective, the parts and work needed as a result of *Saorsa II* running over that lobster pot float in Rockland harbour cost about \$1,000, included two haul outs, and required about 40 hours of my efforts to correct. <insert an exasperated sigh here>

While visiting with Ingrid and Dayton, we were introduced to Helene and Jim M. They were gracious and generous enough to hold a small dinner party in their home to which we were invited. It proved to be a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Again, these serendipitous contacts with friendly folk continue to delight.

After a warm leave taking, *Saorsa II* enjoyed a gentle sail down Barnegat Bay in a light WNW breeze and then anchored in the shadow of Barnegat Light at the inlet. The next day saw Her again out on the open ocean as She made Her way to Atlantic City and then Cape May.

In Cape May, we anchored in the harbour in front of the Coast Guard Base and enjoyed the dulcet tones of new recruits at their morning and evening exercises. The reverie was curtailed when a gale blew in the harbour for five full days. Never have I experienced such strong winds for such a sustained period of time. The wind was never less than nor'east Force 6 and regularly gusted to 7 and 8 for the entire week.

This cost a week of travelling time as venturing onto Delaware Bay in such conditions was not to my liking.



After the gale blew out, we enjoyed a marina day at South Jersey Marina in Cape May before heading through the canal and out onto Delaware Bay. We transited the bay northward, anchored a night at Reedy Island just south of the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal, and then transited the canal to Chesapeake Bay where we anchored in the Sassafras River before proceeding to Annapolis.



figure 1: View of the Capitol Dome, Annapolis

On a mooring in Annapolis harbour, we played tourist in that historic town for a few days. The tour of the Naval Academy was inspiring; the pint at the Galway Bay pub was delicious; the streetscapes were beautiful.

While shopping at Fawcett's Chandlery in Annapolis, we met a staff member Dave G. who proved to be a kindred spirit. We visited his boat out on the hard at a nearby yard and had a tour of the work in progress. He's got a lot of work ahead of him, but She'll be a good cruising boat when he's got Her ready.

On Trafalgar Day, we made a point of visiting the Pusser's Bar in Annapolis so as to *Splice the Mainbrace* in memory of Uncle Horatio's achievements. To my ongoing dismay, shock, and disappointment, there were no celebrations in progress nor were the staff even aware of the auspicious occasion. This was made all the more galling by the fact that the entrance was adorned with the famous image of Nelson at Trafalgar and a brief description of the event. It certainly makes one question the sincerity of Pusser's marketing campaign focused on upholding the finest traditions of Britain's Royal Navy.

On leaving Annapolis, *Saorsa II* made Her way down Chesapeake Bay stopping to anchor in Solomons and Cockrell Creek before arriving in Fishing Bay Harbour near Deltaville, Virginia. While there, several chores were accomplished including replacing the cooling water pump on the refrigeration system and installation of a new electronic auto-helm. We also re-connected with Theresa and Wade W. whom we first met a few months ago in Port Hawkesbury on Cape Breton Island. A most pleasant reunion ensued when we found them docked in front of *Saorsa II* at the Fishing Bay Harbour Marina.

Continuing south, *Saorsa II* spent some time at Norfolk, Virginia, and then moved on to Coinjock, North Carolina, where we met Roxy D., a friend of Ingrid. Roxy has been a professional sailor for the past 44 years and, as one would expect, has many a wonderful tale to relate. She hosted us to dinner at her home where we had a hot shower, a fine meal, good wine, and great conversation. Such wholesome generosity is uplifting.

And, so, *Saorsa II* will sail on. Tomorrow we depart Southport and continue south down the Intra-Coastal Waterway (ICW). In a few days we will be in Charleston and in a few weeks Florida.

I remind my correspondents that there continue to be crewing opportunities available for various portions of this cruise. 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, charming companionship, and wonderful memories.

Yours aye, Bill (aka Captain Zaphod)

