

"NORSEMAN", Walti's notebook, part 4

Saturday, July 27, 2024

At 35°C, it was going to be the first hot day of the summer! In the morning I receive a short message from Luca that the regular crew will be at the berth of the "NORSEMAN" at 15:30 to welcome the new guests. A good opportunity for me to deliver the two boxes of goods.



However, I did some preparatory work and impregnated the most important parts, the large ash wood ship's blocks for the main mast bracing several times and screwed on the axle bolt securing plates.

Then, after years (now 12), I familiarized myself with splicing cordage again and tried my hand at a thimble splice. This was then attached to the dogfish of the upper block. Everything as usual, nessun problema!

Unfamiliar expressions are slang in seamanship, capito?

d. Although their siesta on deck under the awning is disturbed, everyone is immediately wide awake when I arrive. As I unpack, I almost feel like I'm opening the Holy Grail. Bright joy and amazed faces at the contents of the two boxes with Hamburg as the sender.



Its contents: 150 meters of new SPUNFLEX rigging (ropes) of two different strengths, 4 large 2-sheave blocks for the rope hoists, small single-sheave blocks for new halyards, rigging hooks, shroud tensioners, hardwood corals, 10 liters of BENAR oil, UVR-resistant wood coating, rigging twine, and much more.

And last but not least, I can give Luca and Gianfranco, the mechanic, a tool case (160 pieces) from the luxury brand KRAFTWERK with shiny chrome contents.

Both have difficulty hiding their tears. Total goods with a value of more than I was allowed to give away 3'300.00 Euro, wow...!

"A huge thank you to you donors"





Before the new guests arrive, however, I want to assemble my ready-prepared large-mast backstay hoist as a sample for the crew. I leave the material for the second one to them, with the proviso that it should be just as perfectly made and struck when I next visit in a week's time - si vedra?

Learning is learning

5:00 pm. The new guests arrive expectantly in the LEGAMBIENTE minibus. This time a mixed group of slightly older age groups.

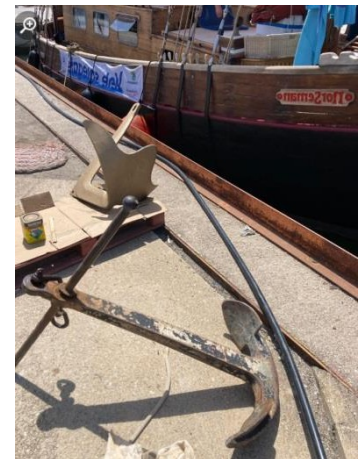
The first thing they are told is to take off their shoes, leave them ashore and only enter the ship barefoot. That sounds somehow familiar, doesn't it?

17:15. A van arrives with the food we have ordered and need. A chain is immediately formed and the many foodstuffs, including huge watermelons and mountains of mineral water packets, are brought on board.

The boat crew tells me enthusiastically about the newly installed M-anchor (bought second-hand on the Internet). This special anchor is a replica of the well-known BRUCE model, but combined with the properties of the plowshare and plate anchors. Everything clear to you? This 50 kg device digs quickly and deeply into the ground with its wide shovels and apparently remains stable and firmly anchored in the seabed with a high holding force, even in strong gusts of wind and when swaying.

An anchor type that secures the oil rigs in the North Sea will probably also suffice for the "only" 30-ton "NORSEMAN", right?

At the top of the picture is the new M-anchor, in the foreground the previously used admiralty or stock anchor.



It's time to say goodbye to the ship. But not without (m)a sketch with the dimensions for a small wooden part that is missing from the ship, for whatever reason.

I wish the whole crew an eventful week. The weather forecast continues to promise good conditions.

Wednesday, August 17, 2024

The weather is still midsummer hot and everything on board is fine, at least that's what I'm told - BUT - what BUT ?

I'll try a clarifying equation:

A few years ago, our then cunning Energy Minister Doris Leuthard proudly announced that the Federal Council had decided to pull the plug on all Swiss nuclear power plants. Action had to be taken now and new wind turbines and solar panels had to be installed on every hill instead of (clean) nuclear power.

However, whether this will actually work is increasingly being doubted and questioned. Nobody yet knows how the increasing electricity consumption will actually be covered as an alternative. AND - the extension of the operating life of nuclear power plants is suddenly once again the subject of debate in the dreamy committee in Bern.

But back to the "NORSEMAN". When I was first confronted with the ship and the new owners in May of last year, I was told, not without pride (see above), that the large generator in the belly of the stern (installed by me personally years ago) had been removed and that the ship would be lit as climate-neutrally as possible in future using only battery direct current.

In the future, the "NORSEMAN" should be sustainable, clean, as emission-free as possible and climate-friendly. Sails instead of an engine whenever possible. So far, so clear.

However, the fact that the wind would not blow every day, but the ship still had to be moved from bay to bay, meant that the reliable old diesel engine was needed.

I was not given an explanation as to how the consumer batteries are to be recharged every day (more than before).

The ship is now in its 7th week underway with crew and guests. At every crew change, i.e. once a week, the batteries are recharged with shore power (a socket on land).

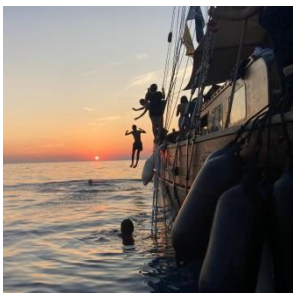
Yesterday we received a call for help from on board that the on-board power was becoming increasingly scarce and that the alternator (power generator), which is driven by the engine, could possibly be defective?

My answer was short and sweet; rather NO, because with one or max. 2 engine hours per day it is impossible to recharge the batteries during this short time.

The fact is that new, albeit small, power consumers have been added week after week. The summer heat calls for a fan, the drinks need to be cool and the young people's cell phones and laptops need to be recharged every night - but how and with what?

Once again, Walti's advice was needed. It was clear and concise; a small, whisper-quiet emergency generator to cover the daily power requirements was an absolute must on board. While the students are out exploring on land, the small generator is started, which has to be powerful enough to recharge the consumer batteries within a few hours.

It took some convincing on my part, but there really are no alternatives, as there is no space on board for either wind turbines or solar panels. In future, alternating current (230V) will be available again if required, which will solve a few problems. Thanks to the Internet and the contents of our "pirate treasure chest", I was able to evaluate and order a suitable small generator in a short space of time. The shipment is on its way to Elba.



You can now look forward to my next notes, the handover and my first experiences with the small power generator.

With this atmospheric picture from on board, which shows the cheerfulness of life on board, I bid you farewell until next time, with best regards,

Walti, Comandante (ret.), currently on relief duty