

The Quebec International Sail Training & Tall Ships Conference 2016.

Report on attendance by Russell Shaw, President of South Passage - Adventure under Sail. (SP)

INTRODUCTION:

This report is submitted as per the conditions of the travel bursary provided to Russell Shaw, President of SP, by Sail Training International to assist with attendance at the recently held Quebec International Sail Training & Tall Ships Conference 2016.

REPORT:

SP was represented at the conference by Russell Shaw (President) and John Davis (Vice President). Hosted by Sail Training International, Tall Ships America and the Canadian Sail Training Association the conference was held in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada from the 28th to 30th January, 2016.

Participation was greatly assisted by the travel support bursary provided by Sail Training International. Their support is greatly appreciated.

In addition to general conference participation SP participated in the session 'Sail Training Programme Showcase' where we, along with representatives of Oliver Hazard Perry and The Warrior Sailing Program gave presentations. We presented 'South Passage - Adventure under Sail. A sustainable sail training model from down under. An analysis of the history and features that make South Passage - Adventure under Sail's business model sustainable'.

We outlined some of our unique features, a purpose built ship (not a replica but one built with a very definite purpose in mind), a ship built for ease of maintenance and durability (not wood), a ship with maximised accommodation (berths for 30), a ship that we own (not behold to anyone) and the ability to sail all year round (no seasonal restrictions). These features, when combined with our Vision, Purpose and Program (ROPES) and our dedicated and passionate members make South Passage – Adventure under Sail a real stand out in terms of sail training and adventure under sail programs from around the world.

For their participation in our presentation each attendee was given a South Passage ZipPull, a memento that is only given to voyagers who sail with us. Following the conference I have received a number of follow up comments about our ZipPull's and how we use them.

A number of information and skills sessions were held covering such topics as Marketing Sail Training, Research into Sail Training and Related Experiential Education, Connecting Sail Training with Mainstream Education and Green Practices Showcase. The worst part of the conference was that it wasn't possible to attend all of the sessions that had value. A full report including copies of the majority of presentations have been loaded on the STI website (www.sailtraininginternational.com) thus ensuring that all interested persons can access the information provided.

The information and skills sessions were well structured and raised a number of questions that I look forward to presenting to the SP board for consideration over the coming months. Of the particular interest were the insights provided in the session 'Connecting Sail Training with Mainstream Education'. An area where South Passage can improve.

In discussion with other conference delegates many common themes were identified and discussed. Following these discussions it is comforting to report that the operation of SP, whilst not without its challenges, is the envy of many within the sail training community for the manner in which we are able to operate over a large geographical area, for the numbers of trainees we are

able to interact with, for the self sustaining structure that has been developed and for the adherence to our objectives that we have been able to maintain.

In addition to the technical aspects of the conference I found attendance to be particularly beneficial in two other areas. Firstly as a motivator, you can't attend a gathering of such enthusiastic and dedicated people without having some of it rub off, and secondly as a point of reference upon which we can benchmark and improve our own performance moving forward.

SUMMARY:

I feel privileged in having been able to attend the conference and feel confident that my attendance and exposure to the wider sail training community will benefit SP in a positive manner as we move forward.

Having had the opportunity to attend a number of STI conferences since 2008 the combined STI/Tall Ships America conferences (Halifax 2008 and now Quebec 2016) are, in my opinion, standouts in terms of content and delegates engagement.

I look forward to attending and contributing to future conferences should the opportunity arise.

Russell Shaw
President
South Passage - Adventure under Sail