

Sails of Issuma

Richard Raskin

As I hope all of you know, we operate the education committee in an open and totally democratic fashion. I consider all club members to be members of the education committee and welcome input and ideas from all. Under this policy, we have consistently produced a very diverse and surprisingly expert group of speakers on a multitude of topics over the years. Also, many members have themselves shared their knowledge and expertise in ways that have been very beneficial in both practical and theoretical ways. This summer, we had the good fortune through the friendly outreach efforts of Trustee Richard Raskin to have connected with a very unusual sailing adventurer by the name of Richard Hudson.

For those of you who did not attend either of Richard Hudson's talks, I hope what is offered here will give you just a taste of some of the wonderful highlights that he shared with us about two fantastic expeditions that he undertook.

On September 14th, Richard came to the club and told us about his wonderful voyage from Vancouver, B.C. to the very southern tip of South America in Patagonia. To accomplish this without bucking headwinds all the way south, Richard sailed first to the Galapagos Islands. His understanding of the winds and currents was a great piece of practical knowledge that is part of his sailing plan. His depiction of the Galapagos from the point of view of an independent boat owner was also illuminating.

However, most of the time was focused on his magnificent trip through Southern Chile and into the majestic fjords and other waterways that make up what is essentially an inland waterway in that part of the world. The remote beauty was nothing short of astounding to us and the pictures that Richard had of the mountains, glaciers, and wildlife were truly phenomenal. If you would like to get a taste of what he showed, you can go to his website www.issuma.com and look through the pictures, Richard's blog and other fascinating details that are posted on his website.

On September 28th, Richard returned to the club to talk about the Northwest Passage he did in 2011. He left Toronto in May and ended in June when he docked in Victoria, B.C. It was fascinating to watch his tales of avoiding icebergs and sailing along the magnificent vistas that line the seaways in that part of the world. He travelled past the coast of Greenland then north of Baffin Island, south of Victoria I and then along the northern and western coasts of Alaska. Sailing along the edge of an active glacier is not something most of us will see but Richard's excellent description and fabulous photos made it a truly inspiring experience and a wonderful tale of one man's quest to follow his dream and live a life totally devoted to the sea and discovery.

Richard was great about describing he methods of food storage, water usage, boat maintenance and the challenges he encountered in keeping the ship and himself together. He did this without refrigeration and most other amenities of daily life. However, at no time in his talks did his Spartan conditions reflect a lack of determination or a diminished spirit. He was a great example to us all for living the love of the sea that we all share.

Also of interest were the things he had to do to keep his steel hulled boat properly anchored in a very wide range of conditions and situations. From tying off to the land to using double anchors

fore and aft, his tale was one of constant vigilance about keeping the boat safe and without damage in a place where repairs to anything serious were practically out of the question. Even in some of the larger towns, things like fuel were often hard to find.

Charts were simply not accurate where they were available and his use of the GPS was what kept him going in the right direction.

We were very lucky to have Richard visit us and we are in the process of arranging for another presentation about his travels along the coast of Brazil. A date for this has not yet been set but we will announce it shortly.

Richard Raskin