



AMERICAN SAIL TRAINING ASSOCIATION

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Mr. Hank Hofford, Chairman  
South Carolina Maritime Heritage Foundation

Dear Mr. Hofford,

I am writing to congratulate you, and the entire Board, Staff, and volunteer workforce of the South Carolina Maritime Heritage Foundation on the happy day of the launch of *Spirit of South Carolina*.

Launching a new ship is an event steeped in tradition and ceremony — as Horace Beck writes in *Folklore and Sea*, “no matter how banal a modern ship launch may appear, it has roots that go back thousands of years to days before Homer, and much of the ritual was deadly serious.” Joseph Conrad wrote that “the love of the sea, to which some men and nations confess so readily, is a complex sentiment wherein pride enters for much, necessity for not a little, and the love of ships — the untiring servants of our hopes and self-esteem — for the best and most genuine part.”

Many ASTA members had the privilege and pleasure of seeing — and climbing around — *Spirit of South Carolina* while she was under construction during our annual conference in Charleston last November, and no one could fail to fathom how much love and pride has gone into her.

It is obvious how important this day is to all of you who have brought this splendid vessel into being. But we want you to know that it is a big deal for us too — for the tight but far-flung community of tall ships and the people who love them. Today’s launch attests to the health and bright future of our common endeavor — shaping lives for the better through lessons of the sea.

We could not be happier than to welcome this proud vessel to the ASTA fleet. We ask that you to accept the ASTA flag as a token of the bond between maritime South Carolina and the wider world of sail training, in which your new vessel will doubtless catalyze many new friendships.

On behalf of the entire ASTA family, we extend hearty wishes for a successful launch, and for many years of “Fair Winds, Clear Skies, and Prosperous Voyages.”

With all our best wishes for a happy and lucky ship,  
/s/

Michael J. Rauworth  
Chairman