



Summer 2007

St. Nicholas' Bag

The Newsletter of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Board thanks The Rt. Rev. Robert Ihloff (recently retired Bishop of Maryland) and Bill Settle (John S. Connor, Inc.) for their faithful service on the Board.

On June 6, 2007, the Board elected two new members: The Rt. Rev. John Rabb, Bishop in Charge of Maryland, and the Rev. Joseph Pagano, Emmanuel Church, Baltimore

Current Board officers & members

Bud Nixon, President
Private Sector Port Coalition

Allene Taylor, Vice-President
Volunteer Associate Chaplain,
Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

Patrick Arey Esq., Treasurer
Abramoff Neuberger and Linder LLP

The Rev. Mary Davisson, Secretary
Director, Baltimore International
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Donald Carroll
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Rupert Denney
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Nora Garman
Women of the Delaware-Maryland
Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

The Rev. Canon Mary Glasspool
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

Capt. George Miller
Association of Maryland Pilots

The Rev. Joseph Pagano
Emmanuel Church, Baltimore

The Rt. Rev. John Rabb
Bishop in Charge of Maryland

Douglas Stevenson Esq.
Center for Seafarers' Rights,
Seamen's Church Institute
of New York and New Jersey

CENTER ASSISTS STRANDED CREW

After over a month at anchor off Annapolis, the crew of the *Green Summer* (a.k.a. *Pacific Chukotka*) spent a week docked just outside the Seafarers' Center. The twenty Russian and Ukrainian men and women had a difficult holiday season, as their vessel was under arrest for several weeks because of unpaid bills. (The crew was not technically under arrest, but had no way of getting off while the ship was anchored.) Fortunately, members of the U.S. Coast Guard telephoned the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center on December 27. We were able to send one Christmas box for each crew member, one phone card for each (free because of these special circumstances), a cell phone, and Russian magazines. The Coast Guard reported that the crew was delighted.



The *Green Summer* Crew welcomed visitors after finally docking near Ft. McHenry. Shown here: Third Officer.

As legal proceedings continued, the Center stayed in contact with the Coast Guard, the three different shipping agencies involved, and the Center for Seafarers' Rights at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York and New Jersey, checking in regularly as to whether adequate provisions had been brought on board.

Eventually, the vessel was released and shifted to the Fort McHenry terminal, a two-minute walk from our Center. Center volunteers visited regularly to check on needs, welcomed crew members visiting the Center, and provided transportation. The crew also gratefully returned the loaner phone. During one visit to our Center, a crew member stated that they had not been paid for three months and that he wanted to consult the International Transport Workers' Federation. Volunteers and staff contacted local ITF inspector Arthur Petitpas, who followed up both in the Center and on the vessel. Within two days, the brand-new owners had paid the crew. The vessel sailed from Baltimore on February 5.

see inside for Christmas at Sea 2007

...recently received email...

Dear Mary, Thank you very much for taking the trouble of dropping us for the service at St. Rita's. It was a really nice service and we finally decided on walking back to the ship which took all of 30 minutes only. It made us appreciate the trouble you took to pick us up even more.

Once again, thank you all at Int. Seafarer's Centre for the service during the Easter hols.

God bless,

M/V Tourcoing

April 10, 2007

Seafarers from India, Croatia, and the Philippines appreciated a ride from the M/V Tourcoing to St. Rita's Church on Easter morning. Volunteers Linda Hollis, Nativity Cedarcroft, and Don Bryant, Baptist Ministry, also visited this vessel during their stay in the Port of Baltimore



VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT:

Volunteer Dick Nagel met a seafarer on one vessel whose son turned out to be working on a vessel docked in another Baltimore terminal about 20 minutes away. After several complicated conversations, Dick was able to bring father and son together—a rare blessing for seafaring families. Dick is from Emmanuel Church, Baltimore, and volunteers two evenings a week, generously changing his schedule to adapt to any gaps in our evening coverage. Jackie Nagel, his wife, often comes in on short notice to welcome seafarers who can find time to spend an evening in the Center.

VOICE FROM THE PAST

One of Director Mary Davisson's first small adventures in personalized care involved a Filipino seafarer on a bulk ship. Returning to his vessel after a shopping trip in a Seafarers' Center van, R. discovered that the case of the new video game he had purchased was empty.

The vessel was scheduled to sail soon, but he telephoned the Center, and Mary took the empty case and receipt back to the store. The staff acknowledged that the mistake was theirs and filled the case, which Mary delivered the next time the vessel called in Baltimore. The crew member e-mailed his thanks, but about a year later, in the fall of 05, he began writing about a different topic. He was now serving on another bulk ship, which would be docking in Baltimore soon, and he wanted to arrange a meeting with a cousin who lived in Baltimore. Because he had very limited access to e-mail and text messaging, Mary made a number of calls on his behalf over the next few weeks, and eventually he was able to see his relative.

But that's not the end of the story! In February 2007, he called from the Port of Brunswick, Georgia, to say that he was working on a car ship which would soon be in Baltimore for 12 hours. Although Mary had prior commitments that day, new volunteer Suresh Ahluwalia kindly worked an extra day in order to provide several rides to R. and his crewmates.



Seafarers Volunteers Dick & Jackie Nagel,
Emmanuel Church



Crew from the Balsa 57 visit the Center's
internet cafe.



Crew from the Cornelia berthed recently at
the nearby Ft. McHenry terminal.



Christmas at Sea 2007



At left: Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church preparing for a recent Christmas. Above: Christmas on board the Cap San Marco included Christmas at Sea gifts.

Dear friends:

It's hard to imagine Christmas in this weather, but we know that many of our Christmas at Sea donors begin work over the summer. We are deeply grateful to all the churches and individuals who have participated in our annual gift distribution to ships' crews of all nationalities and faiths. Many crew members earn less than \$1,000 a month, so a box of sundries makes a big difference in their lives. Even those earning more are moved to know that others are thinking of them and praying for them. Crews returning to Baltimore in February or March often thank us all over again for these gifts. Also, due to new U.S. security regulations and tighter work schedules, many seafarers can't leave the ships to do their own shopping or even to telephone. Your gifts brighten their lonely lives.

A few reminders, should you choose to participate in 2007: please use a medium shoebox or something comparable (such as a tightly closed shirt box). It's awkward to bring a crew 10 large boxes and 10 smaller boxes! So please, make them all medium shoebox size. If you make cloth bags, be sure that they are securely shut, so that items aren't spilling out as we carry them up steep gangways.

In addition, please wrap gifts as neatly as possible, since we don't have enough volunteers to re-wrap. Greetings or cards made by children or a note such as "with love from Mrs. Smith's 6-year-old class" are very meaningful. Most seafarers are fathers, so they will appreciate the joy of a child-wrapped package and card.

Please use our Christmas at Sea Wishlist on the right to help with filling the boxes.

To schedule delivery, please call 410-685-1240. Due to lease and security considerations, packages cannot be left when the Center is closed. When you deliver your packages, please leave complete contact information with the volunteer on duty.

Again, we deeply appreciate your joining us in this important ministry. Thank you and God bless!

Mary Davisson

(The Rev.) Mary Davisson
MaryHTDavisson@aol.com

We are very grateful to all our Christmas 06 donors and apologize for omitting Ascension Lutheran on York Road from our previously published list.



CHRISTMAS AT SEA WISH LIST 2007

Please include the following in each box:

-  A paperback Bible or New Testament, in a modern translation (readable by those whose first language is not English).
-  A greeting or a piece of paper with the name and address of your church, in case the seafarer is able to send a thank-you note. (Most can't, but a few do.)
-  Toiletries, sealed (no unwrapped soap or toothbrushes etc.); and please remember that almost all our seafarers are male.
-  A warm hat or a warm scarf
-  And some of the following: pens and pads, warm socks or gloves, playing cards, post cards of Baltimore, etc.

Please do not use anything larger than a medium size shoebox and wrap as carefully as possible. The seafarers appreciate your generosity, but we do not have enough space or volunteers to handle oversized packages.

PLEASE CALL 410-685-1240
TO ARRANGE DELIVERY.

Note from the Director:

— *Port Woman of the Year* —

Recently I was honored as Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore Woman of the Year. However, this honor truly belongs to the wonderful volunteers and Board members — past and present — of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center. Without their faithfulness, confidence and commitment, the hands-on personal and pastoral ministry to the men and women crew would be non-existent. This is not a ministry of one, it is a ministry of many. I am truly blessed to be part of it.



Join Bishop John Rabb and
the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center
for a 2-hour evening Harbor cruise aboard the luxurious & elegant

Duchess of Pintail

Thursday, October 4, 2007



Waterside tour of the Port
of Baltimore.



At last year's event, sporting
the elegant reflective safety vest
worn by all ship visitors: former
Board member Bishop Robert
Ihloff (now retired).

The Port of Baltimore is the cornerstone from which the City was built and now thrives.
Indeed it remains one of Maryland's most significant industries today.

The Director and volunteers of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center visit
many of the almost 2,500 ships that dock in Baltimore each year
to provide seafarers a friendly welcome, a listening ear, telephone access,
free reading material, and transportation.

Here is an opportunity to enjoy a waterside tour of Baltimore's port in
luxurious surroundings, to hear guests from the maritime community
explain how the Port works, and to help raise funds
for the vital work of the Seafarers' Center.

Evening Schedule & Events

Starting: 4:45 pm - *promptly!*

Finishing: at about 7:00 pm.

Boarding: from Pier 5 (Baltimore's Inner Harbor).

Cost: \$50.00 per person.

Included: Soft drinks, beer, wine, and 'Happy Hour' snacks.

Live narration.

Also available: Cash bar for premium spirits.

RSVP by Thursday, September 20, 2007.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU ABOARD!!!

~ RESERVATIONS for the 2-hour Harbor Cruise ~

may be made directly with Baltimore International Seafarers' Center.
Your name will be placed on our passenger list upon receipt of your check,
which must be received by September 20, 2007.

Checks (\$50.00 per person) should be made payable to
"The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center"
and mailed to 1430 Wallace Street, Baltimore MD 21230.

If you would like to receive a written confirmation of your reservation,
please provide an e-mail address or stamped self-addressed envelope with your remittance.

Questions may be directed to:

<MaryHTDavisson@aol.com>, or phone (410) 685-1240.

About the 124' Yacht *Duchess of Pintail* ~

Elegant and stately, the *Duchess of Pintail* is Baltimore's newest luxury yacht and is U.S. Coast Guard certified to carry up to 149 passengers. Amenities on board include a 1,500 sq. ft. main dining salon, granite topped bar, atrium dance floor, grand staircase, richly appointed lounge, galley, and four open air decks.



About Baltimore International Seafarers' Center, Inc.



The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center is an inter-faith ministry rooted in the tradition of Christian hospitality. We believe in the unconditional love of God for all people, and we demonstrate this love through our commitment to serving the spiritual, physical and emotional needs of the seafarers who visit the Port of Baltimore, regardless of their race, gender, religion, or nationality.

The seafarers we serve are men and women in a demanding industry which keeps them away from home, family, and friends for as much as ten months of the year! Their work is often tedious, dangerous, and lonely, with little compensation. They are from many different lands, cultures, and traditions. They welcome us as readily and easily as we welcome them. Meeting them in their isolated world of international cargo ships makes their world and ours much bigger and better.

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center is an independent non-profit corporation which depends upon contributions and other donations to fulfill its mission. The Center is recognized by the IRS as an exempt organization under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, and all contributions are deductible in accordance with the law. The Center files IRS form 990, which is available for inspection at the Center or at www.guidestar.org. Your contribution will help us to serve seafarers visiting the Port of Baltimore.

We can also use donations of good men's work clothing, recent magazines (news, sports, popular culture, consumers, *Smithsonian*, *National Geographic*), and Chinese and Russian publications.

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VOLUNTEER SNAPSHOT: When volunteer Allene Taylor recently visit-



ed a car carrier, she was immediately asked to speak with a particular crew member. It turned out that he had been on board 13 months, though his contract was for 9 months. He had been trying for months to return home, where his wife is hospitalized. Allene prayed with the crew member at his request and contacted our union liaison, who made sure that the seafarer could fly home from the next port. Allene is a 12-year volunteer from Old St. Paul's and visits seafarers 3 days a week.

"AN EVENING IN THE LIFE"

Our last issue described a summer day during which Director/Chaplain Mary Davisson and Associate Chaplain Allene Taylor between them visited five vessels at four widely separated terminals, provided three shopping trips as well as transportation to the Center, and honored specific pastoral requests. On weekday evenings, coverage is normally provided by volunteers Dick and Jackie Nagel, Pastor Don Bryant, and Darrell Dempster, but Mary covers Friday evenings herself.

She began with a car carrier at Dundalk whose crew had put in a request Thursday for Friday evening shopping. Having left them at Eastpoint Mall and checked in with a paper ship at North Locust Point, she drove back to Dundalk Marine Terminal and discovered thirteen seafarers in search of rides! After returning to their vessel in search of a crew list needed at the front gate, she dropped this group at the Inner Harbor and returned to North Locust Point. She drove one seafarer to the Center for telephone use, free clothes, and videos; at this point, one of his crewmates, as well as three crew members from three different countries off another Locust Point ship, walked into the Center as well. Meanwhile, Mary had a little time to activate phone cards and assemble free magazine bags for next week's crews before she returned various groups to their vessels and completed end-of-week paperwork at 10.

With Gratitude —

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center depends largely on donations to carry out our ministry. In the first half of 2007, we want to single out for special thanks Miss Margaret Tyson, the Diocese of Maryland, Emmanuel Church (Baltimore), and the Derby-Masson Family Fund.

We are very grateful as well to Charles Hill, Shirley Cammack, Marjorie Wood, Allene Taylor, General Ship Repair Corporation, Capt. George and Ginny Miller, Dr. Matthew Rogers, Arthur Sherman, T. Parker Host of Maryland, Linda Hollis, Donald and Anne Carroll, the Rev. Mary Davisson, Brenda Kovacs, Mary Marshall, Janice Sorensen, the Rev Charles Holder, Capt. Suresh Ahluwalia, Alice Brock, Susan Robinson, and the Mediterranean Shipping Corporation.

Churches where Mary has spoken or preached have also contributed to our work: St. James (Monkton), Redeemer (Baltimore), Redemption (Baltimore), St. Martin's-in-the-Field (Severna Park), and Messiah (Baltimore).

Regular magazine donors include Salem Evangelical Lutheran (Catonsville), Roland Park Place, St. John's Episcopal, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran, and others.

If we have inadvertently omitted or misspelled your name, please contact us.

St. Nicholas' Bag Newsletter — writing & editing: Mary Davisson; design & production: Anne Clewell

Would you like to explore the possibility of becoming a ship visitor?

Training is self-paced under the guidance of an experienced ship visitor. Basic requirements include being able to volunteer 4-6 hours per week, ability to climb stairs and enjoy meeting seafarers from around the world.

To learn more about volunteering, please call 410-685-1240 or write baltseafarers@aol.com.