



SAILORS' SOCIETY AUCKLAND

NEWSLETTER – 2009, Mid-Year

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**A charitable organisation working in the name of Christ in
the ports of Auckland for the welfare of all seafarers**

Registered NZ Charity CC 10836

The Sailors' Society represents Auckland's "non-conformist" churches and is a partner, with the Mission to Seafarers (Anglican) and the Apostleship of the Sea (Catholic), in the Auckland International Seafarers Centre at 114 Quay Street, Auckland. Website:

www.aucklandseafarerscentre.co.nz *The Society contributes the services of a part-time chaplain (Major David Millar, Salvation Army), some volunteers, & members to the Board of the Centre, along with modest financial support.*

THE CHAPLAIN WRITES

In all weathers the regular visitation of the ships in the Ports of Auckland is carried out by visitors from the Sailors' Society and the partners from the Centre. I am convinced that there is no activity that compares in importance with the regular visitation of the ships on their arrival in port. It is in our ship visiting that we see the human consequences of the sailors' life as we listen to their stories over a cup of coffee, or sharing a meal onboard as their guest. Often, our visits are of necessity brief as the seafarers are not only in the place where they live, but in the place where they work.

It was a stormy, windy and unpleasant day recently but I was pleased that I had ventured out as the first ship to be visited was one that I had visited many times over the 11 years I have been the Sailors' Society's chaplain here. This was to be one of those special days when I was to relax, listen and gain further insights into the life of a seafarer I had known for many years. This 54 year old man greeted me warmly and invited me to join him in the warmth of the lounge.

Davidic expressed his gratitude to me for coming and shared with me his story. He had been at sea since the age of 19 and throughout his seafaring career his children had pleaded with him to come home, to be with them. This was what he wanted to share – in two years time he was to retire from the sea and to spend the time with his family.

This was the right timing for him to share with myself, for me to listen in the precious, unhurried, un-interrupted time that we shared together. Davidic, a good man that I have always respected, shared his faith with me. It was a tremendous privilege to pray with him. Yes, a tremendous privilege there in the lounge of that ship that plies the waters of the Pacific.

*Thank you all for the continuing support - prayerful,
financial, and voluntary effort - that you give to our work.*

- Major David Millar,

Sailors Society Chaplain Auckland 

SEAFARERS WELFARE BOARD FOR NEW ZEALAND

The SWB is the body which co-ordinates the work of the three main seafarers' welfare societies and others in NZ and which is the point of contact for the societies with the government. Our society is represented at the SWB by the Sailors Society New Zealand (ISSNZ).

The Auckland Centre was well represented at the SWB AGM in March with representatives of the 3 partner bodies in the Auckland Centre present to represent their various societies and organizations.

Larry Robbins, our Hon.Treasurer and currently the Chairman of the SWB, was one of the ISSNZ representatives. He reports that the AGM conducted the usual business of such meetings and received a most interesting update on worldwide piracy from Pam Buckens, a full-time researcher into maritime crime. An update on progress in ratifying the IMO/ILO Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (MLC 2006) was also provided by NZ government officials.

Read about the SWB and MLC 2006 on their website

www.swb.co.nz 



Sailors Society Volunteer, Larry Robbins, with seafarers in the Centre's shop.

SAILORS ASHORE: A NEW CHAPLAIN BOARDS

In February this year I joined the Auckland Seafarers Centre Team. In my 30 years of ordained ministry as an Anglican priest, I have served in a number of Chaplaincies - ITIM Chaplain for Shell BP and Todd on the Maui A rig, and as a Chaplain in the Royal New Zealand Navy, NZ Army and NZ Police. In February I found myself in the unique position of being the acting St James Presbyterian Chaplain to the Seafarers Centre, as that church community seeks a full time minister. It is with that background that I entered this new ministry.

I have observed that the Centre has been gifted with caring Christians, lay and ordained, some with a Seafaring background, who have a prayerful heart for this particular ministry. That "heart" is also reflected in those who exercise Board level responsibility for the Centre.


Ship visiting is the "cutting edge" of the ministry; because it is there that we meet the officers and sailors in their home away from home. As a crew is seldom constant, there are layers of nationality, language spoken, and time served whilst on board that affect the working conditions on a ship.

Officers often have a three month contract, whilst the crew may serve nine months or more on the same ship.

The Seafarers Centre allows them all to get away from the pressures of serving on a modern vessel, relax and re-connect with home, be it by phone call, computer or letter. Apart from the convenience of the shop and money change, the Centre has at its heart St Peter's Chapel with the praying community of St James. Seafarers will often take time to sit and pray or be prayed with when a family emergency occurs. There have been several prayerful ministry occasions in my short time here as Chaplain. Lately, whilst I have been on duty, a Seafarer has been asked to ring 8 bells, (8pm and all is well,) as another sailor has been asked to light a candle for those seafarers held hostage by pirates, and for the Seafarers' families as they await news of their loved ones. Silence is kept and a prayer is said. As you read this note I would ask that you add your prayers to this difficult issue of piracy, which will most likely require a political solution.

Lastly a flu pandemic may be upon us. Please pray for the health of the staff as they seek to bring real ministry to those who travel around the world and may be exposed to this dangerous outbreak. Ministry is always a privilege. I thank God for the opportunity to serve in this small way

To God Be The Glory! Aroha
Fr Ian D Hanley AHC.

[The Sailors Society in Auckland enjoys a special relationship of long-standing with the Church and Community of St James which, for the past 3 years has met at the Seafarers Centre – Ed] 



Memorial candles in the Chapel of St Peter at the Seafarers' Centre

THE CONTINUING NEED FOR THE SOCIETY'S WORK **Extracted from the Annual Report of the Sailors' Society (UK) for the year to 31 December 2008.**

"There is no doubt that improved efficiency in cargo handling equipment and competition between ports to attract vessel operators to use their facilities has led to marked changes in the shipping industry. With the increase in technology and the pressure of competition between ports improving the speed of unloading and loading, ship turnaround times are being dramatically reduced.

Although there is enormous economic benefit to the end consumer in bringing goods and produce to market more efficiently, for the merchant seafarer crewing the vessels that transport these cargoes, the opportunity for a change of routine and the potential for rest and shore-side leisure is diminished every time this efficiency increases. There is no doubt that this has impacted heavily upon seafarers' lives in

port and increases the relevance of the Society's work to serve today's and tomorrow's seafarer whenever the need arises.

Vessel turnarounds are now counted in hours, rather than days, and the effect of these fast port turnarounds is to increase the workload upon the seafarer, not improve their chance to spend personal time away from the ship. The obligation upon port operators to adhere to the ISPS code, which is intended to improve security at ports worldwide, leads to additional responsibility upon the seafarer whilst in port and puts even greater restrictions on the chance for a few hours of continuous shore leave, to relax and enjoy those things that other people take for granted.

Vessels continue to increase in size and the number of people needed to crew them is becoming less as shipboard technology becomes more sophisticated ... The wide mix of nationalities now crewing the majority of ocean going ships can result in them finding themselves socially isolated, even among their work colleagues, as their native tongue is often not the common language of communication onboard, and other than work instructions passed in a common tongue, there may be little informal conversation or social interaction among crew members whilst onboard.







As a consequence, seafarers who are already doing a difficult and often dangerous job in a hostile environment, separated from family and friends for very long periods, become more remote from their native life. They will often feel lonely, unappreciated and become increasingly socially isolated.

All this means that the unconditional approach of our [ship visitors] is increasingly valued and they are treated as a friend among seafarers with a special trusted status.

Our service continues to follow a strong Christian tradition to provide support and respond to all the seafarer's welfare needs. Most of all remaining concerned with their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and the Society's work can provide the antidote to the many problems of modern-day seafaring. The need for what we do is more vital now than it ever was."

[The Sailors' Society in Auckland is affiliated to the UK parent body through the Society in NZ] 

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

 **SEA SUNDAY** will be marked this year by the annual service at the Anglican Cathedral at 11am on Sunday 12 July 2009. All are welcome.  We would be delighted to have the opportunity to tell your Probus, Rotary, Lions Club etc about our work. Please contact the Hon.Secretary if you need a speaker for your meeting.  You can now follow the Society on Twitter @SAILORSSOCIETY  At the AGM of the Auckland International Seafarers Centre at the start of June the Society's Directors to the Centre were confirmed: Terry Nobbs (Society chairman), Larry Robbins and David Millar  Readers may be interested in the website PRAY FOR THE HOSTAGES where (as this newsletter is being prepared) around 17 ships and over 270 hostages are listed as being held by pirates around the world. <http://prayforthehostages.blogspot.com/>  We are grateful to those who have recently made a donation to the work of the Society. We appreciate your continuing support.



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