

their native life. They may often feel lonely, unappreciated and become increasingly socially isolated.

Seafarers will often be required to work on the ship while it is in port with little opportunity to get ashore. Telephone calls and email facilities, if they are available to the crew at all, are expensive from the ship and often beyond the means of the seafarer - except in dire emergencies.

This means that the unconditional approach of the Seafarers' Centre chaplains and volunteers when ship visiting is increasingly valued and they are treated as friends among seafarers, with a special trusted status. The Chaplains and Volunteers greeting the crew to offer 'phone cards and the opportunity for a chat about personal matters, or offering a

lift to the Seafarers' Centre to use its facilities, brings some respite to the modern seafarer.

Fortunately, major problems are fairly rare - though you will read of some in these newsletters (see also <http://bit.ly/SSA14>) - but often our chaplains will be the first to learn of problems aboard and when necessary will liaise with government agencies and ITF (International Transport Workers Federation) Inspectors, or overseas agencies. When we become aware of hospitalised seafarers, our chaplain will visit and is often the sole regular visitor.

Yes. Seafarers Centres do still meet an important and significant need!

Based upon an original comment in the Annual Report of the Sailors Society (UK)

Snippets, news & announcements

A little over 10,000 seafarers used the facilities of the Auckland International Seafarers Centre in 2009. Around 475 ships were visited, about half of them by our chaplain ■ We would be delighted to have the opportunity to tell your Probos, Rotary, Lions Club etc about our work. Please contact the Hon. Secretary if you need a speaker for your meeting. Likewise we would be pleased to work with any church wishing to acknowledge seafarers and hear about the work of the Society ■ We are extremely grateful for your continuing support - both prayerful and financial. We thank those who have recently made donations to the work of the Society and to **Magic Balloons Design Studio (www.magicballoons.co.nz)** who provide a credit card facility, allowing us to accept donations in this way. To request a copy of our brochure or to donate, please contact us at the address above. We are especially grateful to the **JR Lewis Trust** (Guardian Trust) for a significant grant towards our chaplaincy expenses. Your support is greatly appreciated. **THANK YOU!** ■ In our last newsletter we reported on a visit to Finland



by one of our Board members. This included a visit to a new seafarers centre in Helsinki. More details about this impressive centre can be seen at <http://bit.ly/bOGUrS> ■ The **Hong Kong Maritime Museum** is marking "2010 - The International year of the Seafarer" with a series of special posters (one is shown above) - <http://bit.ly/dcboAg> We are grateful to **BetterPrice Hotels** for sponsoring our website. www.betterpricehotels.com

The Sailors' Society, Auckland - Replacing Isolation with Belonging

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NEWSLETTER

First Quarter 2010

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

The Sailors' Society is a non-denominational Christian body which is a partner, with the Mission to Seafarers (Anglican) and the Apostleship of the Sea (Catholic), in the Auckland International Seafarers Centre, www.aucklandseafarerscentre.co.nz, 114 Quay Street, Auckland. The Society contributes the services of a part-time chaplain, some volunteers, & members to the Board of the Centre, and modest financial support. The Society's Board includes representatives from the Auckland Baptist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army churches.



2010 – The International Year of the Seafarer

In mid 2009 the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), declared that 2010 would be "The Year of the Seafarer", endorsing a proposal from IMO Secretary-General Efthimios E. Mitropoulos. The theme - was selected to give IMO and the international maritime community the opportunity to pay tribute to the world's seafarers for their unique contribution to society and in recognition of the risks they shoulder in the execution of their duties in an often hostile environment.

In proposing it, Secretary-General Mitropoulos said that "the unique hazards confronting the 1.5 million seafarers of the world - including pirate attacks, unwarranted detention and abandonment - coupled with the predicted looming shortage of ships' officers, make it ever more incumbent to take immediate and effective action to forestall a situation from developing in which ships are not manned with sufficient skilled personnel". (More information: <http://bit.ly/7LoZfL>)



Sailors' Society Port Chaplain David Millar visits container ship CAP MANUEL

To mark the start of the "International Year of the Seafarer" a calendar was produced for the Seafarers Centre which was given out to seafarers to say 'Thank You'. This was based on a template produced by the International Christian Maritime Association (ICMA). Our thanks to **Positive Print Solutions Ltd** who donated the printing and production costs of 200 A4 calendars. The calendars have proved popular with the seafarers visiting the Centre. The Centre's ship-visitors and chaplains have distributed a number direct to the ships.

THE CHAPLAIN (Major David Millar) WRITES:

Often when I am in conversation with sailors over the Christmas period, I would ask them if they ever made it home on leave for the Christmas festive season. Only occasionally do I hear a seafarer answer 'yes'. On the whole, it is rare for them to be home with family and friends during this season. Always Christmas at sea.

200 calendars were produced to convey the message "Thank You" to the seafarers. They have been distributed and the seafarers have been most appreciative of them and seem charmed to be told that their efforts are appreciated. Seafarers spend over three-quarters of their working lives away from their families and local communities. Telephone calls, laptops and internet use at the Seafarers Centre remain the most important means by which seafarers maintain contact with their

people at home. However, many of them have little opportunity to go ashore. For them the limited communication with home adds to the sense of isolation and loneliness experienced. We exist "to replace isolation with belonging".

A week before Christmas I spoke with a seafarer who had recently been air-lifted from his ship following a generator explosion in the engine room. He had ventured back into the danger area thinking a mate was trapped. The seafarer was hospitalized for a brief period with respiratory problems. The man is a person of strong faith and congenial of nature who has spent many years at sea. What a privilege it was for me to sit and listen to his story, hearing about his family and his love for them.

Prior to Christmas it was great to receive the good news that the cargo ship ANNAPURNA had been sold. She was berthed at Bledisloe wharf for over three months after her arrival from Chile on 1 August. The owner of the 148m vessel, Eastwind Shipping, had gone bankrupt. Some of the 23 crew hadn't been paid for a year and en route to NZ a shipmate appears to have been swept overboard. Most of the crew were flown back to Myanmar, with 4 remaining onboard. We certainly enjoyed getting to know the crew who made good use of the facilities at the Centre during their enforced stay. We also got to know some of the local Burmese community who also ministered to the crew.

Naida Shaw was a Mission to Seafarer (MtoS) volunteer at the Centre for many years. She now lives at Hillsborough Hospital. It was a great joy to visit her at Christmas-time and to convey greetings to her. Naida asks to be remembered to her many friends in the Society. At the Centre's annual volunteers' Christmas party, Pat and Ron Baker, long standing MtoS volunteers, were farewelled. They have moved to Orewa and take with them our very best wishes.



A female seafarer speaks to her family in Russia

Seamens Church Institute launches study into effects of piracy

"Robbery, hostage-taking or sailing through piracy zones can cause mariners to suffer from health and morale issues. Piracy preoccupies senior management with concerns beyond the immediate welfare of their crews, including cargo delays, risks of escalating violence, complex ransom negotiations and the potential for adverse publicity. Trained response to piracy incidents promotes crew safety and protection in the short term and strengthened worker morale, company identity and positive publicity in the long term.

In this spirit, the [New York based] Seamen's Church Institute's Centre for Seafarers' Rights (CSR) has announced a multi-year study of clinical assessment and

treatment for survivors of piracy attacks. The program seeks to identify unique assessors or piracy hostage situations, along with immediate and ongoing medical evaluation strategies for crewmembers and their families.

Study outcomes will include plans to care for families during captivity, clinically assess sailors after piracy incidents, assist families during prolonged piracy episodes, and triage short- and long-term mental health treatment. Study beneficiaries include ships' crews and their families; ship operators and their human resource departments and maritime insurers." More details: <http://bit.ly/bXHICl>

The Seamens Church Institute has also released Preliminary Guidelines for Post-Piracy Care. <http://bit.ly/d0wGiq>

Are Seafarers' Centres still needed?

Despite, or perhaps as a result of, the many advances in maritime technology in recent years, many of the demands made upon seafarers are very much greater than in the past. Ships are larger, but have smaller crews, often arrive and leave at unsocial hours and their time in port is frequently measured in mere hours.

Seafarers may be on contract and away from home for long periods (10 months is not unusual for crew members) and work long hours onboard at sea and in port. In many ships the crew is comprised of a number of nationalities without a common language, English being kept for basic onboard communication.

Even in the best run ships operated by reputable companies, these factors lead to isolation and loneliness. 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



Sometimes it is simply enough to get away from the ship for a few hours. Seafarers can relax at the Seafarers Centre in Auckland.

The Seafarers Centre offers 6 telephone lines, 3 PCs, 7 laptop connection points and Wifi, a small shop, a chapel, TV, recreational facilities and free tea and coffee. Charges are set at a cost-recovery level. The Sailors Society and the other partner societies support their own chaplains and ship visitors and contribute to Centre running-costs as required.

Your donations enable & support this work and help to keep costs to the seafarer down.