

St. Nicholas' Bag

The Newsletter of the Baltimore
International Seafarers' Center

Summer 2020



Our Supply Chain's Invisible Heroes: Serving and Being Served



Jacques emailed us several times before docking, and smiled through his mask during our “stern ramp reunion”!

ing? Staying in touch via email, phone, Facebook, and port contacts. Collecting sanitizing supplies and having our vans professionally sanitized before visiting, to avoid putting crews at risk by asymptomatic transmission. Visiting on gangways, masked and 6 feet away, sharing Hershey's Kisses instead of handshakes, doing errands for seafarers. Seeking funds to cover some of our revenue losses: we couldn't hold fund-raisers and weren't transporting crews, who often donate after rides.

More about our ministry on pp. 2-3.

What have seafarers been doing during the pandemic? **Keeping our supply chain moving.** Spending a year or more away from families, because flights and re-entry into their home countries often weren't possible. Staying on board, because shore leave wasn't permitted by many companies, or because they'd recently spent time in a “hot spot” country. And on top of all that, taking on many extra sanitizing chores.

What has BISC been doing? Staying in touch via email, phone, Facebook, and port contacts. Collecting sanitizing supplies and having our vans professionally sanitized before visiting, to avoid putting crews at risk by asymptomatic transmission. Visiting on gangways, masked and 6 feet away, sharing Hershey's Kisses instead of handshakes, doing errands for seafarers. Seeking funds to cover some of our revenue losses: we couldn't hold fund-raisers and weren't transporting crews, who often donate after rides.

**What have YOU been doing?
Supporting us through checks to
Baltimore International Seafarers'
Center, 1430 Wallace St., Baltimore
MD 21230, or by PayPal at
Baltseafarers.org. More about our
supporters on p. 6—thank you!**

See our photos in color at

<https://www.facebook.com/BaltSeafarers>

—and “like” us!

Memories of Winter and Spring

How we love visiting on board, giving rides, and welcoming seafarers to our center—and how we've missed that during a time of strict precautions! Enjoy these photos from mid-winter, before the shutdown:



Pastor Bob Schmitt (vest), our Lutheran colleague from Seafarers International House, delivered cookies to the Nord Baltic.



The crew of the Atlantic Star has appreciated many rides with BISC.



Pastor Don Bryant (name tags), whose ministry is supported by the Mission to Seafarers, brought a group to the center from the Singelgracht.



Photo of Parsifal courtesy Mike Derby.

But when the shutdown began, a number of seafarers communicated by cell or mail. One arrangement to get SIM phone/internet cards to a crew member required nearly 30 calls and mails (because of security rules and his work schedule). Another seafarer, confined to his cabin for 10 days after going ashore for a (non-COVID) doctor's appointment, enjoyed a lively correspondence during his isolation. And from the MV Parsifal, Capt. Nocon wrote: "We are healthy on board. I am thankful to the Lord that our crew are still in high morale. Thank you very much for [reaching out by mail]. God bless!"

Summer 2020: A New Season of Service

BISC has been visiting 15 to 20 crews a week since May 31. We waited till Governor Hogan began relaxing restrictions, our vans were professionally sanitized (courtesy of Ports America Chesapeake), and our sanitizing supplies were fully stocked. Each visitor has been wearing a mask and standing 6 feet away on the gangway or stern ramp.

Inquiries about crew welfare, Hershey's Kisses (in place of handshakes!), and reading matter have been gratefully accepted. Many crew members have been stuck on board for a year, with no chance to fly home and no shore leave in port. Chaplains have also delivered packages from family members, shopped for crews, and assisted in any way possible.



Bibles in Tagalog and English as well as a Russian magazine were among the reading matter delivered to a vessel at Tradepoint Atlantic (Sparrows Point). Chocolates (small bag in seafarer's hand, right) were also happily received!

Standing at a safe distance, these seafarers are smiling through their masks



This seafarer appreciated delivery of a much-needed cable.



BISC

Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

Current Board membership:

President:

Capt. Michael Reagoso
McAllister Towing of Baltimore, Inc.

Vice-President:

Michael Derby
Wallenius Wilhelmsen Ocean

Treasurer (non-voting):

John Thompson

Secretary:

Edward Moos
Moran Towing Corporation

Members:

The Rev. Scott Bellows
St. David's Church, Baltimore

Capt. Michael Flanagan
Association of Maryland Pilots

Mark Schmidt
Ports America Chesapeake

Allene Taylor
Volunteer Associate Chaplain, BISC

Leland Van Koten Esq.
Volunteer ship visitor, BISC

Mr. Niels Veenema
Tradepoint Atlantic, LLC

Gregory Waidlich
Atlantic Container Line

BISC Staff

Director:

The Rev. Mary H.T. Davisson

Associate Chaplain (volunteer):

Allene Taylor

Baltimore Baptist Association

Chaplain:

Pastor Don Bryant

Seafarers International House

Chaplain:

Pastor Bob Schmitt

Treasurer:

John Thompson

Bookkeeper:

Bruce Polanowski

Volunteer ship visitors:

Sunil Ahluwalia, Fred Craig, Capt. Mike Flanagan, Bob Garske, Art Guyton, The Rev. Linda Hollis, Rich Roca, Tom Taylor, Lee Van Koten, Joe Zollickoffer

St. Nicholas' Bag Newsletter:

Editor-in-Chief: Mary Davisson
Design and Production: John Davisson

Facebook Administrator:

Joe Zollickoffer

Website Administrator:

Mercy Kariuki

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center regrets that we must cancel our September 23 Harbor Tour. Distancing requirements would limit the number of guests and prevent our raising enough funds to support our work.

Refund checks will be mailed to all those who have purchased tickets. If you do not receive your refund by July 15, please contact us at BaltSeafarers@aol.com.

But stay tuned! As this newsletter goes to press, our Board of Directors is planning our first-ever Virtual Harbor Tour.

Are you an industry leader? Does your company or facility have something special to show our supporters? Contact us at BaltSeafarers@aol.com to sponsor a portion of this unique new video.



*Happy to support the
important work of the
Baltimore International
Seafarers' Center*



(800) 542-1542 or (610) 595-2100

www.westernfumigation.com

Are you curious about what makes our port tick, or what our volunteers have learned in serving the seafarers who serve our supply chain? Visit BaltSeafarers.org or our Facebook page later this summer for details about this virtual tour. **No hard hat required to go behind the scenes at the port facilities featured!** Visit places we couldn't include in our past tours--from the comfort of your living room.

Do you prefer in-person events? We expect to offer our ever-popular Golf Outing on October 15 as scheduled.

Please see next page for details.

Baltimore International Seafarer's Center Golf Outing



**Oct. 15, 2020 * 9:30 am tee time * 8:00 am breakfast,
driving range, check-in.**

The Elkridge Club * Play one of the area's most storied
courses.

All proceeds support our center's
ministry with those who bring
the world to our shores.

Captain's Choice Tournament

Register Foursomes

Sponsorships Available

Breakfast and Lunch Included

Registration coming soon to

BaltSeafarers.org



Supporters Keep Service to Seafarers Afloat

The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center is deeply grateful to the ITF Seafarers Trust for a \$14,901 grant to help continue our work during a significant revenue decrease resulting from the pandemic. We also thank the TK Foundation, Mr. Steuart Thomsen, and an anonymous foundation for very special support at this challenging time. And ongoing support from the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, St. Mark's Church Highland, and the Propeller Club of Baltimore have been essential in sustaining our service.



Other important leadership support during the first half of 2020 came from: Capt. C.S. Yearwood, The Rev. Mary Davisson, Ms. Martha M. Yeager, St. Andrew's Rector's Discretionary Fund, Ms. Diane and Mr. Richard T. Roca, Mr. Edward T. Bedford, Holy Trinity Churchville

A number of supporters generously donated in memory of BISC volunteer Jim Johnstone: Mr. Bruce L. McDonald, Bella of Canton LLC, Mr. Robert S. Johnstone and Ms. Kristina Parker Smith, Mr. Edward Ballard and family, Ms. Virginia Johnstone, Mr. Paul M. and Ms. Susan Hyman, Ms. Julie Ballard Johnstone.

And we greatly appreciate support from the following: Mr. Edwin S. Davisson (in honor of the Director), Mr. John Davisson, Mr. Craig Merson, Mr. John R. and Ms. Virginia A. Riopelle (in honor of Capt. Michael Flanagan), Mr. David R. Duffield MNI, Ms. Cheryl Flynn, Mr. Aurora Bautista, Mr. William and Ms. Catherine Taylor (in honor of volunteer Tom Taylor), Ms. Eileen Menton, Mr. Bryce Turner (in honor of Fred Craig), Mr. Richard Fawcett, Mr. Gislin Dagnelie, Ms. Allene Taylor, The Rev. Herbert K. Lodder, Ms. Alice Bockman, Ms. Rebecca Kornblatt, Ms. Jane M. Clark, Ms. Janice Noel Hulse, Ms. Helen W. Wheeler, Capt. C.S. Yearwood, Ms. Helen K. Waugh, The Munro Family Trust, Mr. George Thomson, Col. Sheldon and Ms. Anne L. Slater, Mr. Richard J. and Ms. Carole A. Hires, Ms. Sherrill J. and Mr. William D. Pantle, Mr. Thomas J. Lamm, Mr. Robert A. Herb, Bata Marine Inc., Ms. Jan Marie Prenger, Ms. Gloria Petit-Clair, Mr. Billy L. Chirdon, Mr. Charles E. Partridge, Ms. Linda W. Deponai, Mr. Patrick D. Volovar, Ms. Virginia and Mr. Richard Patterson, John S. Connor Inc., Mr. Patrick Connor, Ms. Linda J. Eilman, Ms. Louise Young Meledin, Ms. Christine Cleary.



A conversation about funding (Hershey's Kisses for Crews) led to a generous donation from St. Andrew's Glenwood, where Director Mary Davisson preached in 2018.

2020: A Year to Remember—and a Year to Remember Seafarers!

We can't know in July whether public health concerns will limit our service to crews in December. How can YOU help?

Please help us prepare for the worst while hoping for the best:



1. Please put items in ONE-GALLON SEALED PLASTIC BAGS (NOT boxes this year).

- ★ Why? If public health is a concern again, few of us might be available to deliver gifts. So they'll need to be lighter and more portable.
- ★ And if circumstances prevent any delivery before 2021, we wouldn't have space for an accumulation of 1600 bulky boxes!

2. No food, no food, no food! Please: NO FOOD of any kind.

- ★ Why? "No food" has always been our policy. Our storeroom is hot, and so are ships' storerooms. Candy melts, and gum overpowers the room with spearmint fragrance.
- ★ But 2020 gifts might not be delivered till 2021 if conditions worsen. Now, more than ever, we can't store food.



3. Then what can you include?

- ★ A one-gallon bag accommodates a pocket or paperback New Testament (modern English if possible), a warm hat if not too bulky, warm socks or gloves, small sealed toiletries (gender-neutral), pad and pen, post cards or magnets of Baltimore or D.C., and/or pocket calendar.
- ★ Please don't over-fill, so bag won't come open, and do seal carefully.
- ★ Christmas stickers (no bulky bows) on the outside and/or cards on the inside are options to make your package more festive.

4. What if you've already wrapped boxes?

- ★ Please contact baltseafarers@aol.com to find out if we can accommodate. NO FOOD please! Boxes must total UNDER 3.5 POUNDS (no hardback books, no large toiletries.)



The Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

1430 Wallace Street, Baltimore, MD 21230

410.685.1240 | baltseafarers@aol.com | www.baltseafarers.org

Change happens!

Have Christmas at Sea instructions changed this year? Yes (p. 7)! Is our “Virtual Harbor Tour” (p. 4) a work in progress? Yes again! Could public health restrictions affect details of our golf outing (p. 5)? Possibly. Can BISC begin training new volunteers again soon? We sure hope so!



So, please stay in touch. Write **BaltSeafarers@aol.com** for updates, or call 410-685-1240, or follow us on Facebook. Thank you!