



**Galveston Seafarers
Center**
Serving Mariners from all
Nations

GANGWAY

The Newsletter Linking the Galveston Seafarers Center to the world

The Galveston Seafarers Center has gone through a lot of changes since the last *Gangway* newsletter was published in 2016. However our service to our seafarers has remained a constant through the years, and as always, our commitment to their welfare will continue to be our top priority no matter what the future brings.

Please enjoy our new 2019 addition of the Gangway!



THANK YOU

Board of Directors for your dedication and support of the Galveston Seafarers Center
Board meetings held on 4th Monday of every month

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OUR MISSION

SAFE HARBOR: The GSC is a Safe harbor where seafarers will find a place to rest and a welcoming community of friends.

CARE: We are committed to the welfare of all People of the Sea calling a Galveston harbor. All are welcome with love, respect and dignity.

ADVOCACY: We give voice to all People of the Sea in times of hardship. We seek solutions for all.

COMPASSIONATE SERVICE: We facilitate support from the community to Persons of the Sea and raise awareness of their needs.

GENEROSITY AND GRATITUDE: We invite our community to be generous and kind to the People of the Sea and to recognize and support our mission.

Galveston Seafarers Center is a 501 (c) 3 organization therefore all donations are tax deductible.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION on how your donations can make a difference to the lives of so many, we invite you to visit our website at:

www.galvestonseafarerscenter.org

PLEASE VISIT our website for additional information regarding upcoming events, wish lists and volunteer opportunities!

Thank you!

A SPECIAL THANK YOU...

... goes out to our friend **Kathleen Bracken** for her wonderful donation to our center. This beautiful wooden carving of the Last Supper is a superb addition to our ever-changing seafarer's center.

Ms. Bracken stopped by the center the other day to give me a bit of a background on its origins. According to Ms. Bracken, her mother bought the carving in the 70s while she was teaching nursing at the University of Guam.

Interestingly enough, Ms. Bracken bought the piece from one of the students in her class. The student was from a village nearby whose residents made their living carving pieces such as this one. In fact, the student was able to attend college due to a collective effort from the carvers from her village. The sales from the carvings such as this one provided her the opportunity to go to nursing school. She eventually went back to her village after graduation and was able to use her skills to treat the very people who helped put her through school.

I don't know about you, but I think this story adds to the allure of its unique beauty.

So thank you Ms. Bracken for your marvelous donation to our center. Your generosity is very much appreciated.



THOUGHTS FROM A SEAFARER'S WIFE....

Thousands of seafarers frequent our ports each year—many of which spend many months away from their families and loved ones. Here at the center, we meet many wonderful people working within the maritime industry, most of which are employees of the many cruise ships docking at terminals here in Galveston daily. In the short time I have been here, I have learned a lot about our friends who frequent our center. I am amazed at the friendliness, gratitude, and acceptance they ALL express when striking up a conversation with me and my colleague Denise.

Last year Denise's husband Javier invited his god-daughter to live with them. Coincidentally, her husband is a singer for Carnival Cruiselines, and he transferred to the Valor in order to be near his wife. I've met Ms. Abigail many times, and considering the fact that she has become an important part of Denise's family, I have gotten to know her and consider her a friend as well.

Denise made a comment the other day that I should write about the life of a seafarer's wife. And so this article was born.

I sat down with Abigail to get a feel for the life of a seafarer's wife from her point of view. I suspect her story is similar to many wives dealing with separation of their spouses. While vacationing with her family, she met her husband while on a cruise. Abigail says that he walked right up to her mother after one of his performances and asked to be introduced to her and her sisters. Romance blossomed from there.

When I asked her how she handles the months of separation that inevitably comes from being a seafarer's wife, the expression on her face conveyed a myriad of emotions—love, longing, determination, and resolve. Her answers conveyed the same. Understandably, the separation is difficult, especially considering they are young (both being in their early 20s) and practically newlyweds. "Living with Denise's family and hanging out with friends helps distract from missing him," she says, "I think living with them makes this separation bearable." "I go to school and work part time. Now that he is a part of the crew of the Valor, we are looking for an apartment so we can concentrate on our future."

Looking at her situation from an outsider looking in, I think back to when I was in my 20s and how I would feel were I in her position. I think that we are still trying to establish our identities when we are that young, trying to do that and marrying at such a young age is tough enough, I can't imagine this scenario is ideal for nurturing a relationship. But, the determination behind this young lady's sweet disposition says that they are definitely up for the challenge.

I met the hubby a few weeks ago, and it is clear to me that the miles of ocean between them only serve to make their commitment stronger. When the Valor comes to port, the center becomes their rendezvous point to relax and spend much needed time together... even if it is only for a few hours. They reconnect over a game of pool or sitting quietly, heads bent in familiar conversation, until it is time for him to board the Valor for his next voyage. Both agree that the center is a welcome part of their short albeit meaningful reunions.

As I mentioned earlier, I am certain that this story is familiar to many of our friends who come to the center. I can't help but admire the sacrifices they make to support their families' well-being. I wish my friends both close and just visiting, good luck and much prosperity throughout the years.



IS THAT A FACT?

National Maritime Day is a United States holiday created by congress in 1933 to show appreciation to those individuals who are an important part of the maritime industry. Maritime vessels are also recognized for their special place within the industry as well.

The origin of the holiday (which is observed on May 22nd) is tied to a ship named *Savannah*, the first steam propelled ship to successfully navigate the Atlantic from the United States to England.

In 1819, the *Savannah* set sail from Savannah, Georgia with no passengers or cargo due to the owners of the vessel's lack of faith in a successful voyage. The ship made it to Liverpool 29 days later.

The Galveston Seafarers Center recognizes the significance behind this holiday every day of the year. However, we invite you to join us the week of May 22nd, as we recognize our mariners....

An Eagle Scout's Story

Alex and his family came into our center on October 19, 2018 bearing gifts—gift boxes that is. He and his troop recently made it their mission to put together 50 gift boxes full of useful items essential to many seafarers who make their living on the ocean. I had a chance to chat with Alex to find out a bit about this young man, and how he came up with the idea to help seafarers for their troop project.

Alex (14) got the idea for the project while visiting family in Lake Jackson at Christmas. After attending mass at a local church that conducts supply drives of the local seafarers' center, Alex decided that doing something similar for the Galveston Seafarer's Center would be the perfect solution for his troop's next project. In lieu of a supply drive, Alex's troop decided to put together gift boxes for our seafarers, a service that GSC promotes every year around the holidays providing everyday items such as toothbrushes, razors and the like to seafarers who aren't able to obtain such items while at sea.

As I was talking to this young man, I was impressed with not only the depth of his interest in the cause of aiding seafarers, but with the well spoken, confident, intelligence behind his approach that, in my opinion, is a bit rare to see in others—no matter what the age. In between taking the time to fulfill his scout duties, and doing the type of things kids his age are interested in doing (in his case: mastering guitar riffs and dabbling in film-making), I was surprised to hear him say that he and his troop "liked the sentiment" of helping our seafarers. "I would always see the building while visiting Galveston, visiting Dickens on the Strand—stuff like that," he says, "and we [his troop] figured... what if we go a bit more than a supply drive, what if we actually put together kits you know... make it more of an event?"

We at the Galveston Seafarers Center surely appreciate the kits he and his troop provided. I am positive that the seafarers, who will be receiving the gift boxes, will be just as appreciative. We wish to thank Alex, the members of troop 1845, and his wonderful family, for their support for our friends that come into our ports. Your interest in such a rewarding cause is what makes our community the strength behind our motivation to aid those who make a living aboard a ship.



We truly appreciate our
loyal volunteers who have
helped us throughout
2018!

The Propeller Club

Michael Ford	Abigail McFall
Matthew White	Jacob Morgenroth
Emily Soltow	Kyle Salles
Kaitlin Hall	Lydia Zepeda
Alison Weldon	Daniel Longoria
Daniel Boorman	Golden Zenon
Blake Sway	Creason Young
Mariana David	Nicholas Foderetti
Jacob Coppedge	Zachary Dexter
Jake Waters	Logan Garrison
Bjorn Briggs	Cole Masington
Adam Thiboldeaux	

Community Volunteers

Cynthia Stancil
Nicholas Lopez
Jeremy Depaolo
Javier Aquilar-Moran
Izeya Aquilar-Hightower

Thank you!!!



TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING...

The seafarers who visit our ports spend many months at sea away from family and loved ones. We at the Galveston Seafarers Center strive to convey our appreciation for the sacrifices seamen make by collecting gift boxes full of useful items and distributing them to our friends at Christmas.

Our community has been very generous over the years building and donating gift boxes to our center for the seamen coming into our ports, and this year has been no different. We want to express our gratitude to those groups and individuals who helped to make this season a bit brighter for many of our friends away from home during the holidays.

Thank You !

Reza Hatami
Holy Family Parish Altar Society
Jack La Barge and Deb Dugan
Rhonda and Betty Cummins /OLG school
St. Michaels Episcopal Church
Doris and Hershel Glanz
Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Life BR 129
St. Michaels Episcopal Church La Marque, TX
St. Thomas More Franciscan Fraternity
LULAC Youth Council 1929 Ball High
Wesley Tabernacle United Methodist Church/
In honor of O.N. James
St. Mary Catholic School /5th Grade class
First Presbyterian Church
Our lady of the Gulf Catholic School
St. Mary's Belles
Stephen A Hodgson
First Lutheran Church
Boy Scout Troop 1845
Catholic Daughters of the Americas
First Presbyterian Church
United Methodist Women of La Marque
St. Mary's League City
Maximillian Kolbe Fraternity
WISTA/Women's International
Shipping & Trading Assoc.
E1Bands
The Tilton Family
WELCA St. Johns Lutheran
Church/Ladies of St. Johns
Knights of Columbus #9978



COMMUNITY GENEROSITY IN ACTION...

On December 29th 2018, the Galveston Daily News published an article about a special donation made to the Galveston Seafarers Center by a group of pilots wives and their friendly neighbors in their building.

Kelli Schuessler and Dawn Smith, their spouses and other members of their community of friends and acquaintances from Eibands condominiums, banded together to raise awareness for our mission to serve the thousands of seafarers that come into our ports. Their donation of clothes, toys, personal care products and other useful items were very much appreciated in support of our efforts to provide aid and comfort to seafarers far from home. But it's the donation of a Three Speed Step-Through bike, refurbished by a local bike shop ZippEBikes, that caught the attention of reporter Keri Heath with the Galveston Daily News.

Many visitors to the center are under time constraints, limiting the time spent to run errands or enjoy time away from their maritime duties. The donation of the bike to the Galveston Seafarer Center offers our seafarers a convenient and faster way to accomplish these tasks around the island.

The article has raised awareness around the community about our cause, prompting additional donations of bicycles and other items and cultivating interest in the volunteer opportunities we have available here at the center.

We appreciate not only the exposure this article generated for our important purpose, but we sincerely admire the generosity of Kelli, Dawn, and their community of friends and loved ones who facilitated the actions that made this article possible.

Thank you so much!



SANTA'S NIGHT OUT PUB CRAWL EVENT!

The 11th Annual Santa's Night out event benefitting the Galveston Seafarers Center was a huge success! Many participants turned out in their Christmas season's finest attire (Santa and Reindeer galore—OH MY) to show their appreciation to our friends who frequent our ports this holiday season. Guests were encouraged to bring items of necessity such as work gloves, socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste and the like for the men and women working within our maritime industry. Thank you to all who participated!

Thank you so much!

Murphy's Irish Pub	Patrick's Bar
Yaga's Café	Stuttgarden Tavern on the Strand
Tsunami Bar	The Island Pour House
Sharky's Tavern	The Proletariat
Bubba's On the Strand	BLISS Lounge
Sound Bar	The Wizzard
Shark Shack	Daiquiri Time out
Buckshot Saloon	



Music For the Masses

My colleague Denise showed me a clip on our Facebook page from a few years ago with a couple of musically inclined seafarers playing a lively tune on the bongo drum and acoustic guitar that we have here in the center (see pic below). Just yesterday I listened to someone playing a guitar riff from the song *Sweet Child O' Mine* from a 90s band called Guns n' Roses –pretty well I might add. Last week I was treated to an off-key little ditty from a seafarer, delivered with such passion that one had to admire the confidence. My colleague and I regularly sing Motown tunes while working... you know the type of songs I 'm talking about... the musical earworms that stick in your noggin' long after your head has hit the pillow for the night. In a nutshell, this facility is musically inclined on a regular basis... and I must say, it is a welcome addition to the laidback atmosphere of this place.

Dear reader, we would like to take advantage of this talent with additional instruments of expression. Therefore we humbly ask for donations of musical items to continue the influx of our symphonic geniuses. Items we would sincerely appreciate include:

- Acoustic and electric guitars
- Sheet music
- Drums
- Other musical instruments not listed here are appreciated
- Amps

Your contribution of these items keep the guitar riffs and singing (off-key or otherwise) a constant for hundreds of seafarers that come to our center. As an added bonus, knowing the contribution will be used to nurture this creative expression, bringing joy and humor to many visitors to our center is great for the soul.

Thank you so much for keeping the music alive and thriving!

Just look at these guys... Fabulous!!



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Providing the means to make a positive difference in the lives of visiting seafarers, be it providing material comforts that contribute to physical ease and well-being, or just a friendly shoulder to lean on. This is our organization's top priority.

Your tax deductible donation is extremely important in keeping our safe harbor for our seafarers thriving. Your contribution enables us to:

- Provide access to free Wi-Fi, laptops, telephones, and other methods of communication to our seafarers to keep in touch with loved ones
- Provide television, billiards, books and magazines, DVDs for viewing and other forms of entertainment throughout the center geared toward rest and relaxation for our seafarers
- Provide snacks, refreshments and other everyday items we take for granted on a daily basis such as personal care products or clothing items
- Provide in-house chapel based on religious principles of all faiths around the globe
- Provide the means to improve and maintain our facility and develop more services relevant to our seafarers

Your contribution is important to the success of this rewarding organization and is greatly appreciated!

