



MISSION TO SEAFARERS – HALIFAX

# Flying Angel

Caring for seafarers around the world



SUMMER 2021

## Letter of Recognition



Hello Ms. Helen,

The man worthy of listening is the one who uses speech only for thought and thought only to speak truth and virtue. Far from any philosophy and far from being ungrateful we are part of a corporation unique in the world and worthy of our elders who taught us the profession of navigator, Oh how noble it is because of its importance on the world economy.

Having said that, I have just conveyed with this modest message, on my own behalf, on behalf of my colleague Captain Kamel BENRABAH and on behalf of all my crew members and on behalf of my Owner, my deep gratitude and sincere recognition for all the efforts that you, your staff and all the volunteers of your club (THE MISSION TO SEAFARERS at HALIFAX) have made for the well-being of the crew.

We can simply thank you, my thanks a few times do not reflect all the efforts and goodwill clearly displayed by your team towards all the sailors of the ship M/V IMEDGHASSEN in particular and the sailors of the world in general, so I bow to your charity and especially your dedication to assisting and assisting all the sailors who call at the Port of Halifax in Nova Scotia.

Dear Ms. Helen, you are leading a mission of extraordinary nobility of which you and your team members can be proud and if only the High Authorities of the

wonderful country that is CANADA could appreciate your efforts and consequently grant you a grant equal to the work you do.

Nevertheless, one thing is certain, I and all of my crew will show you, our gratitude.

To conclude my message, I say a big THANK YOU and I tell you that you and Mr. Joseph LOOT, your wonderful people and God bless you.

Best Regards

Kindly

Capt Abdelkader AKROUR

Master of M/V « IMEDGHASSEN »

Registered n° : AL3460

IMO N° 9459125

The Mission to Seafarers work worldwide in support of seafarers who have been mistreated or abandoned. Please keep the seafarers in your prayers.

### Please Donate

Website: [www.missiontoseafarershalifax.ca](http://www.missiontoseafarershalifax.ca)

Mail: Mission to Seafarers Halifax  
P. O. Box 27114, NS B3H 4M8

Drop in: 844 Marginal Road.

Mark your calendars for noon luncheon **JUNE 24TH**, first **TAKE OUT BBQ 2021**, hamburger, potato salad and dessert—\$12 per meal, pre-orders only by contacting [hglenn@missiontoseafarershalifax.ca](mailto:hglenn@missiontoseafarershalifax.ca) or call 902-456-1658 or leave a message at 902-422-7790.

**LIGHT AND HOPE TO SEAFARERS WHO KEEP OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY AFLOAT!**

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## The Imedghassen

The **Imedghassen**, an Algerian flagged container ship built in 2012 diverted to Halifax due to mechanical issues on January 9th. Crew members spent 3 months weathering cold Atlantic nights docked at the Port of Halifax. Mechanical issues ensued, one after another. There seemed to be no end to dismaying news day after day. With critical prescriptions depleted, experts at **Praxes Medical Group** attended to medical issues presented. Meds were prescribed for crew with the greatest of expediency. In our efforts to serve these essential workers who contribute to the continued operation of international commerce and the global economy, volunteers kept the Mission open when the crew were relieved from their duties. Crew members were transported to and from the Mission for respite, to go to the dental clinic, the Superstore and the Syrian Market.

Our friends at **Mission Mart** were called upon to provide much needed warm clothing during these extraordinary times. In our quest to repatriate Captain Kamel Benrabah, we are grateful to **Bob Betts of Protos**, the **CBSA** and **Transport Canada** for their roles and expediency.

Captain Kamel expressed sincere gratitude for all services rendered and after being on board the vessel for 2 full years, he was finally able to see his family in April 2021. Norman and Susan Picton, and Palma Heming hosted a BBQ for the crew prior to their departure.

Captain Abdelkader Akroures' letter of recognition expresses gratitude for the work we do during a world pandemic! We thank our partners, donors and well wishers, as You have been instrumental in helping us assist seafarers deal with stress at sea.

Blessings in abundance to these Captains and their crew for resilience and patience and hard work.



## MISSION OPERATIONS UPDATE

The first half of 2021 was not unlike 2020 in that two vessels were detained in the Port of Halifax. Both for long periods of time, with crew in need of provisions and TLC on many levels. This year, while all our lives have been changed due to the pandemic, seafarers have found themselves stranded, running out of crucial prescriptions and no way to get home to their families. Seafarers trapped on ships for months with contracts over—still hoping for a means to get home! Others, unable to re-join their vessels, contract in hand but no work—thus no pay.

We continue to offer our ministry to seafarers visiting our Port. Our volunteers continue to shop for essential provisions and deliver Sims and top ups to the bottom of the gangway. Yes, even during “the lockdowns”, we continue to practice stringent

COVID-19 protocols to ensure volunteers and seafarers remain safe.

As a MtS Canada board director, an advocate to the Atlantic COVID Committee and a member of NAMMA, I am grateful for the opportunity to share challenges and successes with colleagues around the world during this global pandemic. We continue to work towards developing a Seafarers Welfare Board in Atlantic Canada. I have nominated Joseph Loot, PhD as well as Captain Jim Calvesbert, The Company of Master Mariners to join the Atlantic Seafarers Welfare Board. Their expertise and resourcefulness will be instrumental in moving critical strategies forward.

We continue to be a strong force advocating for seafarers. We are able to do this because of your support.

Thank you!  
*Helen Glenn, Mission Manager*

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## STI SAN TELMO

### PORT HAWKESBURY COMMUNITY RALLIES DURING EXTRAORDINARY TIMES

The Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and the staff at the Town of Port Hawkesbury contacted the Cape Breton Pilots on April 15 to see if they could facilitate the delivery of care packages to the seafarers stranded onboard the STI San Telmo. The Cape Breton Pilots donated items as did other local businesses. This initiative led to many others jumping onboard with donations. The Atlantic Pilotage Authority sent toques. A Superport Marine's launch boat was used for the delivery that took place the morning of April 20. These gifts were a complete surprise for the crew onboard, who were elated and appreciated this act of kindness from the Port Hawkesbury community.

*How a town rallied around a quarantined oil tanker off the Cape Breton coast | CBC News*  
[tinyurl.com/PH-Tanker](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada-atlantic/pe-nova-scotia-port-hawkesbury-oil-tanker-1.5811111)

Dear friends of Port Hawkesbury.

What a wonderful moment when a pallet of surprise items and messages was brought on board today.

Given the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in, this gesture of kindness and your gifts today, not only raises morale but makes us all realize that there are those ashore who understand the role we play and more importantly care about the position we now find ourselves in.

Hopefully we will soon be declared free of this dreadful disease. And of course, all our thoughts are with the full recovery of our valued team member isolating in a hotel ashore, but we will always remember the thoughtful and heart-warming gesture you made today. Our sincere thanks to all those who contributed and to all in Port Hawkesbury who have provided their support.

Best regards,  
Vladimirs Iljins/Master, m/t "STI SAN TELMO"

TO Vladimirs Iljins, Master and Captain

Your kind words are so appreciated, and we are so happy the gifts from our region were well received. My thoughts will continue to be with you as you all recover—please let me know how things proceed with recovery. Also if there is anything you may need over time, please reach out. It would be a pleasure to help if I can.

Sincerely,  
Brenda Chisholm Beaton  
Mayor, Town of Port Hawkesbury



Thank you to all who assisted with this incredible initiative. Father Roman Dudanowskyj of the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Church in Sydney was able to reach out to the isolated Ukraine seafarer and communiated via phone to ensure all his needs were met. Igor was elated with news of being repatriated to Ukraine after he recovered. We thank ITF Karl Risser for his role in this endeavour. An incredible team effort!

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## Empowering the Seafarer Through Human Rights Education By Joseph Loot

*“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime.”*  
—Chinese proverb

Seafarers are essential workers before, during, and after the global COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the spread of the coronavirus worldwide and the slowdown in the international economy, these invisible global workers quietly continue to operate the invisible global shipping industry and contribute to keeping the global economic exchange’s feasibility. Yet, the seafarers are abused and exploited as they labour hard away from home on perilous seas. Protection of seafarers’ rights is inadequate despite existing international regulations. A critical missing piece in the law enforcement puzzle is the seafarer who knows, understands, and can act on his/her rights. Thus, educating seafarers of their rights is necessary to ensure fair treatment as essential workers and human beings.

Existing international laws guarantee seafarers’ employment and social rights. The Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (the Seafarers’ Bill of rights), a labour agreement formulated through a tripartite (government-employer-seafarer) consensus, is a core treaty. The MLC guarantees the seafarers’ freedoms (of association and against

forced labour, child labour, and discrimination) and rights (safe and secure workplace, fair terms of employment, decent working and living conditions, and health and social protection). Complementary core agreements are the United Nations human rights treaties (1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights) providing for seafarers’ social and economic human rights.

External and internal actors are involved in the implementation and enforcement of the legal guarantees. Externally, the State, ship owners and managers, and civil society organizations (CSOs) act to prevent violations and provide redress for grievance. Internally, seafarers act to either exercise their rights or seek appropriate redress against infringements.

The reported and unreported abuse and exploitation of seafarers manifest the actors’ inability to enforce the existing guarantees fully. Various forms of ill-treatment are evident in the current crew change crisis. Most seafarers are ignorant of their rights and incapable of protecting themselves from corrupt governments and rogue shipowners. CSO efforts to provide welfare are insufficient, especially when the seafarer cannot respond for lack of knowl-

edge of their rights. Incidentally, the goods and services provided by CSOs become momentary dole-outs and create seafarer dependence on charity. The incapability for independent action further weakens the seafarer, especially when CSOs cannot assist when critically needed.

Keeping the seafarers ignorant of their rights makes them easier to abuse and exploit. In maritime education and training (MET), the study of the MLC is a low priority. Worse, many non-traditional seafarers working in cruise ships’ hotel operations have not undertaken MET and are ignorant about the MLC except its casual mention in pre-employment orientation. Ignorance of their legal rights while working at sea strengthens the seafarers’ subservience to unlawful authority.

Human rights education (HRE) is an essential mechanism to empower seafarers. Grounded on an international legal principle under the 2011 UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Research, this mechanism complements the lawful activities of states, ship owners and managers, and CSOs in upholding the seafarers’ rights and promoting their welfare. HRE is a necessary precondition for work on ships. It fosters in the seafarer the knowledge and will to act on their rights and protect themselves. So, instead of simply giving seafarers fish, educating them to fish enables them to be more productive in contributing to corporate revenue, government economy, and global commerce.

**A prayer for seafarers** *Father God, you gave us in your son a perfect example of self-giving endless love. We ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit we may give ourselves in love and service to one another. Help us to remember that all service is sacred to you. Remind us constantly that you are concerned for all parts of our lives. Support us all in generous living. Amen.*



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## Captain Earle Wagner Marine Management Award

Captain Earle Wagner is an active friend of the Mission to Seafarers Halifax. The Marine Affairs Program, Dalhousie University recently announced the establishment of the Captain Earle Wagner Marine Management Award. The award is the result of a generous endowment from Captain Earle Wagner. It was developed to support the ideals of the Marine Affairs Program and recognize Master of Marine Management students conducting visionary research on the impacts of climate change. Students are challenged to think originally about the impact of global warming on marine and human life, and make fact-based arguments

related to their research. Captain Wagner is a World War II veteran and member of the Marine Fraternity. He began his career as a merchant seaman and was later employed by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans as a Marine Superintendent. Captain Wagner's vast experiences in marine transportation led him to believe that, "our oceans, unexplored, contain undetermined resources that if discovered and utilized, could be a valuable asset to humanity." We congratulate Captain Wagner for his vision and generosity!



## Chairs Message

I can confidently state that this was the most unusual year in my memory. There is not enough room in this report to detail the many issues that have occurred around the world since the COVID-19 pandemic began, but I wish to deal with a few noteworthy items.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Helen Glenn, Joseph Loot and all the Mission's volunteers for keeping us going throughout this period. COVID has turned the Mission's usual operations upside down, but our staff and volunteers have adapted to changes and implemented required measures quickly and efficiently and that has allowed us to continue operations in some form for most of the last year.

Unfortunately, COVID meant all our usual large fundraisers, the Golf tournament, Toast to Spring and Christmas luncheon were cancelled, however, we were able to have a few monthly luncheons that were very successful and perhaps gave the port community an occasional taste of normalcy. Regrettably, the pandemic is creating significant financial hardship across many sectors and the Non Profit sector is being particularly badly hit. The Mission survived 2020 pretty well intact as is evidenced by the financial statements, however

because of the uncertainty created, 2021 is expected to be a very difficult year for the Mission.

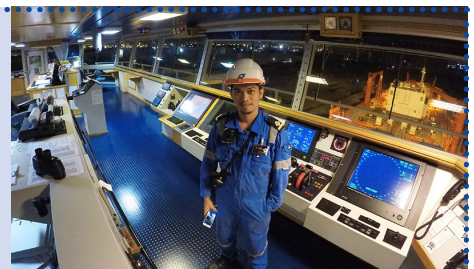
Finally, it would be remiss of me not mention the incredible hardship seafarers around the world have faced and continue to experience as this pandemic rolls on. Stories of Seafarers being kept on ships well past their contract dates, being abandoned in ports and being refused shore leave are commonplace. The Mission in Halifax as well as Missions around the world have been working hard to assist and support seafarers where in the face of restrictions and bureaucratic barriers. With all that said, it would be easy to see nothing but gloom in the future. However, the rollout of what appears to be effective vaccines, is beginning to show some positive signs and it feels like by the summer we will see a substantial reduction in restrictions.

I am confident the Mission will hold its golf tournament in some form this summer and I fully expect to have the community together in person for our Christmas lunch in December. Thank you again to Helen, Joseph, our volunteers and the broader maritime community for your continued hard work and support.

*Alastair Gray, Chair*

**June 25<sup>th</sup> International Day of the Seafarer. We will celebrate with another Donut delivery extravaganza here in Halifax.**

"Seafarers: at the core of shipping's future" has been selected as the World Maritime theme for 2021, reflecting a clear need to raise awareness of seafarers vital role in world trade and increase their visibility.



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## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

# PATRICIA THOMPSON

When this vivacious woman met with me back in 2013 to discuss a volunteer position with our Mission, the depth of her kind heart exuded from her. Our Tuesday afternoon watchkeeper, Pat continues to be an active and caring volunteer throughout the pandemic. Pat often sets the ambience for events such as our volunteer appreciation Christmas celebration as well as a Toast to Spring. Be those lighting issues, music, displaying artwork or merchandising silent auction items, the goal is always to enable positive flow of people whilst capturing the energy in the room. Pat brings class and positivity to everything she does. Organizing our Free Room, handing out treats to seafarers, making coffee, cashing out concession items, or simply sanitizing. Pat has great organizational skills and is an excellent proof-reader. There is very little Pat cannot do. Did I mention she has an awesome sense of humor? Time spent with Pat is always enriching because of her incredibly nurturing personality. Oh, and she is an accomplished painter and dancer as well! I certainly hope our relationship with this beautiful humanitarian lasts for many years to come. Pat shares a bit about her life.

At 16 years of age I left the inner city of Halifax, hitchhiking with a friend to Montreal, where I spent the next 15 years. I married and had 2 children, Christian and Dionne. I loved Montreal very much and have many terrific memories.

Maritimers like living close to

the ocean. This feeling initiated the return to Nova Scotia. We moved to Truro. A small town was not ideal for me. Noticing a sharp difference in the metropolitan versus small town mentality led me to seek out and join the Multicultural Association of Colchester. A move that changed my life.

In the meantime living so close to the Nova Scotia Teachers College provided the opportunity to continue my education. I was always interested and developed skills in foods, sewing and lifeskills. I was accepted in the home economics program and graduated after 3 years with Associate of Home Economics in Education.

I continued to study through Acadia University's extension program and received a diploma in career counselling. I also graduated with my Bachelor of Education from Saint Mary's University.

Unfortunately, or in retrospect fortunately, we divorced. Coupled with my education and drive, I secured a variety of interesting jobs. Teaching home economics, coordinating career re-entry programs for women, and my last job in Truro, was as a social service worker.

My interest in multiculturalism grew and I was elected vice president of the local branch, then a board member of the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS).

During this time I met my current husband, Ross Thompson who was working for the Nova Scotia department of education in Truro. We married the same time he was transferred to Halifax. Also, the Multicultural Association of Nova Scotia (MANS) had an opening for an education coordinator, whose main responsibilities was coordinating ethnic cooking courses. Everything fell in

place. Ross and I married and this job led to 15 years of a very exciting career. I also inherited 3 stepchildren, with 7 grandchildren and 1 great grandson.



My years with the association were highlighted by activities such as: teacher in-service training; police and RCMP training; writing and presenting education briefs on multiculturalism and anti-racism to a variety of conferences and organizations. I was one of the founding members of the Multicultural Festival and creation of Pier 21 Immigration Museum.

I prepared and edited two books; "A Handbook on Cross Cultural Counselling" and "Bridging the Divide" the cultural experiences of African Canadian immigrants in Nova Scotia, for me, these were great accomplishments.

After 15 years with MANS, I decided to start my own business, working mostly on immigration issues and the delivery of culturally appropriate health care.

This all led to my discovery of the "Mission to Seafarers." I was thinking of retiring and volunteering. During my daily drive to Point Pleasant Park, I always wondered what the white building was. When I researched the Mission, I thought it was perfect for me. I wanted to use some of my cross cultural sensitivity training. I was interviewed by Helen who hired me. I have enjoyed the past seven years very much. It has resulted among many things; working on a variety of projects, and meeting some very interesting people both fellow volunteers and seafarers.

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## Case Study: MT Iba

The first time that the Mission to Seafarers team in the UAE became aware of the issues facing the crew of the MT Iba was back in May 2019. We received a WhatsApp message to our office from a seafarer reporting that his company had ceased to send supplies, be in communication or pay any of the remaining crew on-board for a period of five months. A not uncommon experience for us here where regular reports of abandonment or injustice give us a busy caseload month on month. This crew had affectively been abandoned. Our first response is to gather as much information and then we make a short and medium term plan for how best we can help.

In this case there were five crew on board. The Chief Engineer Naywin from Myanmar was the lead spokesperson and he and the 2nd Engineer, Riasat Ali from Pakistan had been under contract on the vessel at the time of first contact for two years, with at least five months of these without support. The remaining three Indian crew had been sent on as relief just a few months earlier as the trouble began to escalate, only to find themselves stationary at the anchorage eight miles from the coast of Sharjah for the entire time they had been on board.

We quickly realised that the crew needed food, water and fuel supplies urgently which we organised and delivered within 24 hours whilst we made a plan for a visit to meet with them at the anchorage in the days following. The life of a seafarer can be lonely and isolated at the best of times, yet when we visited we were

the first face to- face contact that they had received for more than three months. They were tired and fearful but delighted to see us.

We learnt that the owner was facing a significant financial crisis and that this was not the first time that this company had neglected to support one of their crews having abandoned four vessels back in 2017.

From that first visit began the slow process of advocating on their behalf to seek to find a way for them to be paid what they were due and repatriated to their families. The process of seeking recompense can be painstakingly slow and frustrating and with the vessel out of sight the issues facing these seafarers, and others like them can be hidden. Over the subsequent months we had lots of false starts with potential new buyers and attempts to encourage the authorities to arrest the ship and auction her made little headway.

Then the pandemic struck and everything stopped.

Almost a year passed with us still visiting and providing supplies as often as we could, whilst they waited patiently for the storm of the coronavirus to pass. Yet at the beginning of 2021 they were still at the anchorage becoming more and more desperate when a literal storm

late one January evening saw their main and secondary anchors fail. After a 12 hour battle with the conditions they found themselves stuck having run aground but no longer at the mercy of the waves.

When dawn broke they realised that they were not just run aground but found themselves 50 yards from a public beach in the Emirate of Umm Al Qwain. This sudden visibility led to a change of gear in the repatriation process. As they were no longer hidden from view, ordinary people began to ask about and support their cause. Within a week a new buyer had been found and after some frantic last-minute negotiations on the beach a deal was reached.

We are now only a matter of weeks away from their return to their homes and their families. Their wages have cleared the bank and been sent home, supplies have been plentiful and they have enjoyed engaging with the public who come to sit and walk and wave from the beach. Over the almost two years that has past since that first communication we have become friends. Oddly we will miss our regular visits and conversations but we will take encouragement that we played a small part in getting them a measure of justice and a chance to rebuild their lives with their families.



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# THE FLYING ANGEL

## Announcements

- We are hopeful of announcing a date by end of August for a Golf Tournament in the Fall.
- Thank you Metcalf & Company Barristers and Solicitors for the substantial donation hand-delivered by Frank Metcalf. This will go a long way to assisting our seafarers during these extraordinary times. Established in 1986, Metcalf represent clients in the marine, transportation and related industries. Their client base includes small, medium and large corporations. They advise on all aspects of the corporate and commercial component of clients' business.
- Mari-Tech 2021 "Vision, Innovation & Trending in the Marine Sector" was hosted by the Atlantic Branch of the Canadian Institute of Marine Engineering (CIMarE). The event was originally planned as Mari-Tech 2020, an in-person conference and exhibition for April 2020 at the Halifax Convention Centre but due to COVID 19, had to be postponed. Mari-Tech 2021 was held April 27-30, 2021 virtually and attracted over 400 delegates from around the world with 25 industry exhibitors, 12 technical presentations, 4 keynote addresses and 3 plenary panels. In lieu of gifts for the speakers at the conference, the organizing committee of Mari-Tech 2021 was very happy to make a donation to the Mission to Seafarers, Halifax in the amount of \$2,000 to support the Mission's ongoing work supporting seafarers.

## SEA SUNDAY 2021

**Sea Sunday** is the global celebration of the enduring and vital work of the Mission to Seafarers. It has been happening every year for over 160 years and is our biggest fundraising event of the year. On Sea Sunday, your church can become a powerhouse of prayer and fundraising. Each year in July you can join with thousands of other Christians across the world who come together to pray, celebrate and fundraise to support those seafarers who are working so hard for us.

Even before the global Covid pandemic led to seafarers having restrictions on access to shore leave, issues such as piracy, shipwreck, abandonment and separation from loved ones were just a few of the problems merchant seafarers could face. In 2020, as nation after nation went into lockdowns of varying severity, many of these unseen keyworkers were required to work beyond their contract lengths with many spending a second Christmas away from home and sometimes not even having stepping on land.

Around the world, The Mission to Seafarers provides help and support to the 1.5 million men and women who face danger every day to keep our global economy afloat. Through our global network of chaplains, staff and volunteers we offer practical, emotional and spiritual support to seafarers through ship visits, drop-in centres and a range of welfare and emergency support services. **Please DONATE.**

## The Mission is thankful to our sponsors!

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## Mission to Seafarers Halifax

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Tel: 902-422-7790 Fax: 902-420-9786  
Website: [www.missiontoseafarershalifax.ca](http://www.missiontoseafarershalifax.ca)  
Location: Opposite Pier 24, Ocean Terminals

We are open 9:30-3:30. Til 7:30 when ships are  
in Port. Closed Sundays.

### Helen Glenn, Mission Manager

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### Joseph Loot, Assistant Manager

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