This Christmas issue of The Gangway Bulletin comes complete with a new layout and a new feature - “Sailor Girl Diary”. Here is the first instalment of “Sailor Girl Diary” by volunteer Kate:

“Sailor Girl Diary”
I was asked by a fellow member of Stella Maris to write an article for The Gangway Bulletin on what it is like to be a new member of this volunteer group. I suppose I should start off with how I have become involved with Stella Maris at Taperoo in the first place.

On one of my, shall we say, irregular trips to Mass on a Sunday at the Sacred Heart Church in Semaphore, Father announced that it was Seafarers Sunday and, as usual when there is something out of the ordinary on, a special collection to assist the work of this group! Father also announced that Tim, from the Stella Maris organisation would be giving a brief talk about the organisation and would be available for donations and further information after Mass.

Well, that was it for me! I thought some divine hand was leading me on to be a volunteer for not being a regular Mass attendee! What could I do but put my hand up and volunteer in the hope that I would get some dispensation in the end for not attending Mass every Sunday!

The first night, I excitedly got ready to go to the Thursday night session in Taperoo with my husband teasing me about picking up sailors. With a cheeky wave to my husband, a “Hell..ooo Sailor!” yelled out my car window, I was off to Stella Maris. I have always wanted to pick up sailors and blow me down if now I pick up busloads of them!

On that first night, I met my Stella Maris mentors, Peter and Clare, who welcomed me to the house and set about ‘teaching me the ropes’. I must admit my head was reeling with money exchange rates, the prospect of learning to drive the bus, security codes, turning everything on and off, cash register duties, locations of berths for the ships and general duties when in the house.

I went home and decided to take it one step at a time to gradually learn the ropes. Now I really am a sailor girl and loving it!

“Sailor Girl diary” - November 26th
Tonight Peter and I picked up twelve Chinese sailors from the ship *Sakizaya Elegance* and one sailor from Sri Lanka off the *Opal*. Tim was at the house getting all the computers in order and updating the virus programs for each one. Peter decided to set up the Christmas tree, but I think Clare will take over the decorations as they looked a little wild!

After some money exchange activities, the sailors were all desperate to go shopping at Port Adelaide, so I went with a busload of shoppers determined to get to the Coles Supermarket. In a frenzied hour of shopping, they all emerged excitedly, carrying at least two or three plastic bags full of food ranging from fruit to bread buns. The most popular purchase was large bags of beautiful Australian Navel oranges that were an essential item for nearly every shopper. They must have been on special!

Now I know why I pick up so many orange peels down on the Largs North beach each night when I do my nightly beach walk and clean-up!

They all went back to the ship early, no doubt to get stuck into all the nice snacks they bought, so we did some housework and then packed up for the night.

“Sailor Girl diary” - Dec 3rd

Well no sailors tonight but it was a good excuse to do some housework around the Taperoo headquarters! I drove the bus down to Gate 1 in Coughlin Road, Outer Harbor but there were no sailors coming off the ship. I thought I might stay on for a chat. I spent about three quarters of an hour getting acquainted with the Flinders Port Security personnel. Had a great talk to Vikki who was on duty.

When I drove back to the house, Tim and Peter were just about to send out a search party because they thought I had been hijacked. They couldn’t ring me because the mobile was still on the table in the house. It was like having two mothers worrying about me! So many things to remember. “Don’t worry boys, next time I’ll take the mobile so you can check on me!”

**More on Birkenhead**

As discussed in our November issue, Birkenhead, Port Adelaide is of English origin (after Birkenhead near Liverpool, England) and means ‘head of the birches’. Mobil Oil Australia P/L, an affiliate of Exxon Mobil Corporation, built its Birkenhead terminal in the 1920s, (under its then name of Vacuum Oil Co. P/L). (Incidentally, the name of Port Stanvac comes from ‘Standard Vacuum’ Oil.)

**Why ‘Ahoy’?**

We’ve been saying “Ahoy from Stella Maris, Adelaide - The SA Apostleship of the Sea” at the beginning of our newsletter each month for the past four years. The saying was just something that had been used in our very first issue back in March 2007. Back then, the newsletter simply started with “Ahoy – from the Apostleship of the Sea”. We decided back in November 2011(57 issues ago) that it would make a good intro for our future monthly issues. But what does “Ahoy” mean? I always thought of “Ship ahoy” meaning something like “Ship sighted” (or “There’s a ship in sight”). My pocket Oxford dictionary, however, states that ‘ahoy’ is a nautical term used in hailing (greeting/saluting). The dictionary also describes ‘hailing’ as a call to (or of) a ship or a person. It seems then that we can continue with our greeting “Ahoy from Stella Maris”.

**Why “The Gangway Bulletin?”**

Back in March 2007, and until October 2008, our newsletter was, it seems, simply titled (the) “Gangway Bulletin”. When the mantle of Editor was passed on to me (Steve Reynolds) in September 2009, however, the name was presented to me as “The Gangway Bulletin”. ( Heck, that was over 6 years ago!) That very first Gangway issue explained the reason for choosing “Gangway Bulletin” as the title of our newsletter. It was because “A gangway is a bridge joining two separate items; in our case, a ship and land. It provides access between people, cultures, even different ways of life. “Gangway” is also a call demanding attention, a statement that something is happening near you, something not to be ignored.”

**Why just two pages?**

We keep the content of our newsletter down to just two pages for a variety of reasons, to keep the printing costs down for example. We also don’t want to overload our readers with too much information. Although all issues of “The Gangway Bulletin” have been restricted to just two pages since September 2009, it wasn’t always that way. In the early days, some issues extended to 3 or 4 pages, with the help of a bigger masthead.

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