

Making headlines isn't always easy for charities, but in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Mercy Ships made some waves. So to speak. (sorry...) I was detailed to drive one of the ship's vehicles up from our last port in North Carolina to meet the ship as it arrived. The fog was chilly, but the welcome was warm. The "maritime provinces" have long been known for their hospitality – as several grateful planeloads of stranded travelers discovered on September 11, 2001 – and the Caribbean Mercy was the most recent recipient, as our summer PR tour continued. The port authority invited us to moor downtown at the Tall Ships quay (right), and they donated all of our fresh water from the city line. For a floating village like us, that's a lot.



This was the first-ever visit of a Mercy Ship to Canada's Atlantic coast, and we were very encouraged by the response. Halifax is a small city, maybe half a million, but it's young and vibrant, with three major universities in town. Several TV stations volunteered to air a commercial for us, and people came in for ship tours from as far away as New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. We were even more encouraged by the way the local churches welcomed us, and by the way we saw them caring for their own city. The oldest Protestant church in Canada, St. Paul's Anglican, was right on the leading edge with a free coffeehouse for homeless people. My team spent one of its Friday nights there, playing a little blues and jazz and just hanging out to talk with them. Another church was planning an event with free food for passing drivers, just to let people know they were loved. They asked us to help out with some face painting and balloon animals for the kids, so our team got out the clown clothes (left), and I got to dust off my poodlemaking skills. No, that is not me in the Raggedy Ann dress.



While in port, we conducted the usual tours and receptions for medical professionals, mariners, pastors, and everyone else, as always. Probably our biggest single evening in Halifax, however, was the citywide "Edge of Mercy" event. Its local organizers had been planning a huge outdoor concert/worship time with everyone in the city invited, but they couldn't find a venue. When the Caribbean Mercy arrived, there seemed to be a

breakthrough in the logistics. The port authority *waived* the \$1,200 fee for use of the public boardwalk in our central downtown location, and a professional sound company offered its equipment and staff for free. The stage was set up right across from the ship, and there were roughly four hundred people there at any given time, with hundreds more passing by and stopping to listen. I wish the photo (below left) could do it justice.

A week and a half ago, it was already time to leave for our next port. The ship pulled in its mooring lines and sailed south for Boston on glassy-smooth seas that were unusual for the North Atlantic. I didn't mind, as I was being trained on the helm. I've been drafted into the deck department for the next few weeks to help them through the present personnel shortage until we tie up in Belize on the first of August. This mainly means that while my work schedule has become somewhat more mundane, my sleep schedule is far more entertaining than it used to be. Especially on the sails. We stand "four-on/eight-off" watches while underway, rotating between lookout and helm to stay alert. You get weary, but you also get to be the one seeing the first lighthouse on the horizon as the darkened ship plows on between sea and stars. Besides, I now have a new personal record in my Largest Vehicle Driven category, as the Caribbean Mercy's official displacement checks in around 2,300 tons.



So now we're in Boston (below right) for our last PR port – a small fish in a big pond, but word is getting around. Two weeks from today, we'll sail for Florida to load supplies. A week after that, we'll already be on our way down to Belize. Thanks for thinking of me, and for your continuing support. And please, pray for us as we go. It really does work wonders.



Jeremy