

# Chinese Interns, a Win-Win For All Concerned

By Ray Harris, Safety Volunteer

We are so lucky on the Midway to have connected with Cultural Homestay International, a non-profit that places students in host homes with the goal of promoting international understanding and goodwill through people-to-people exchanges. We welcome many visitors from China, and most of them speak little or no English. Our interns who come to us via CHInet.org are an invaluable resource.

They work in various departments, and the most recent group worked with the Docents and Guest Services. A common goal among the interns is to practice their verbal English and to learn about American culture. Each and every one said they had met their goals.

Photo by Barbara Karle



*Tech Library volunteers were a tremendous help in spring 2015, working to archive original ship's drawings. Pictured here: Liu Yong, Alex (Huang Yongjian), and Jay (Jiaye Zhang)*

They have proven their value time and time again as the call goes out over the radio, "We could use an intern up here for translation." There was an incident aboard the ship a few months ago when a young



Photo by Robert Genat

boy bumped his head. This occurred in the island, and the interns were called upon to translate. They were able to determine the extent of his injuries, keep the parents calm, and advise them on what was happening until additional assistance arrived. This might have had a very different outcome without their "Midway Magic" skills. Another incident happened when a disabled elderly Chinese gentleman became separated from his family. Intern Frank Wang (Chuang Wang) stayed with him for more than an hour and kept him calm until his son and daughter-in-law found him. Frank enjoys helping people, and this incident gave him a sense of accomplishment.

Our interns come from different areas of China, with at least two from one group attending Zhejiang University in Zhejiang, China. Another attended the Northeast Agricultural University in Harbin City and another attended the Shanghai Finance University. They all come with varying skill sets and we try to place them where they will be of the most use and where they can best attain their goals.

The most recent group included the following, listed by their chosen English names.):

Cathy 王若  
Nancy 发自我的  
Ellen 陆惟劼

Joyce 袁小迪  
Frank 王闯  
Alice 徐悦  
Kam 胡侃鑫

Our first group of interns worked closely with Suzanne Brown in the Tech Library. They worked below decks helping to catalog the original drawings of the ship and enter them into a searchable database. When Mac McLaughlin discovered they were working behind the scenes, he encouraged them to work with Guest Services and the Docents, a decision that helped them better achieve their goals and also enhanced the guest experience aboard Midway.

They all expressed happiness having worked with such nice people on the ship. One of the things they found surprising in the United States was how people will smile at you and greet you even if they know nothing about you. They also enjoyed the beautiful San Diego weather and the clean air, as some parts of China are plagued with air pollution problems. They mentioned that they were able to learn many new words that they never knew before, such as the term "shanghaied" which is an old merchant marine phrase for "to kidnap" in order to augment your ship's crew. They also learned naval terms such as "aircraft carrier" and "brig."



Food in China is notoriously inexpensive and the interns were a bit dismayed with the price of food here in the U.S. Another issue was mass transit here is not as effective as it is in China. None of them found a good authentic Chinese restaurant here. Thank Goodness, they seem to enjoy our American fare, anything from sandwiches to hamburgers, pizzas to wings. While their host families are responsible for providing three meals daily, everyone likes to go out to eat from time to time. Speaking of host families, if you would like to offer one of our future interns a home stay, please feel free to contact the nice folks at [Chinet.org](http://Chinet.org). All the requirements are right there on their web site.

# 谢谢

No one can deny that the Chinese interns have been a valuable asset to the Midway, and certainly, our visitors from the People's Republic of China were pleasantly surprised to find people on board with whom they could easily communicate. They come to work every day with a big smile on their faces, and willingly do whatever is asked of them. This is a relationship that we hope will continue for a long time. So, to our interns, past, present and future, we say:

Thank You, 谢谢 (Xièxiè), and please come back soon!



*Answer key for "Spot the Difference" from page 21*