



Gooney Gazette II

*Friends of Midway Atoll
Newsletter*

Dedicated to the preservation, education and history of our national treasure- Midway Atoll

Summer 2010

How to land at Midway?

by Darlene Moegerle President FOMA

Photo Credit: Gunther Riehle



Many have asked me questions about how they might go to Midway for a vacation. Needless to say, it isn't as easy as it was in the old days, when Uncle Sam loaded up a huge plane or a troop ship and dropped you off on this island paradise! Visiting Midway is problematic for several reasons. First, just getting there is difficult. There are no commercial airline flights to Midway. All of the provisions, food, supplies and people are carried on a small G-1 plane with limited seating. This plane is a charter of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and makes a round trip once a week. Everything that Midway needs is carried on this single flight. As you can imagine, people become secondary to the needs of the Refuge.

The second reason why visiting Midway is difficult is the issue of room and board. With the limited number of persons that the Refuge can support, the number of visitors must be restricted. It takes about 60 persons to keep Midway operational. With limited housing and

the need to prepare three meals a day for the employees, you can imagine that the practicality of having "guests" is difficult.

The best way to visit Midway is through The Oceanic Society. Oceanic Society is a commercial tour company that has several educational tours and select restoration activities planned for Midway. These groups spend one or two weeks working on needed research, such as assessing the current status of Green Sea Turtles, or working on historic preservation of some of the significant buildings. It isn't a vacation of swimming and sunning on the beach, with an afternoon of golf and dancing in the evening.

On occasion the Fish and Wildlife Service will invite a limited number of people to spend a minimum of three months on Midway working on habitat restoration. Room and board are provided in exchange for daily work as directed by the Refuge Manager.

Maybe someday in the future the situation will change, but for now that is the situation.

■ **Photographer Gunther Riehle sent FOMA his musings and photographs after his visit to Midway.**



i love nature. and photography.

i am a member of photographic society of america.

i take part in many photo contests worldwide.

i am pretty well known in this amateur photographer scene globally, as i judge regularly contests in usa, australia and europe of course and also run one of the top amateur events in the world too.

i was last november / december in antarctica, and one of your members, mark from galapagos travel was there too. he mentioned that midway is such a special place with lots of mega friendly and photogenic and basically fully tame birds

so i got back home ... searched the internet ... found oceanic ... and booked the next trip :-) life sometimes is as simple as this hahaha.....

experience on midway was simply outstanding. and i MEAN outstanding. wildlife there is simply gorgeous, several times i was just lying flat in between the albatross crowds and laughed myself half to death when the non breeders were grouping up ... looking at me from far away... then approaching me from different directions ... some trying to steal my baseball cap from behind, others trying to open my shoe laces and others just checking whether i am edible simply incredible i took almost 7000 images in the 7 + 2 days i have been there is a little paradise ... i hope for the wildlife there that midway will never become a mass tourist place, but "tourism" will still be big enough to allow oceanic to operate regularly and have fish & wildlife allow regular visitors. i am pretty sure i will return some time to midway, no matter about the costs.



and even though at home i am a pretty lazy bum when it comes to pulling weeds or cleaning up my garden, on midway i - well - not really enjoyed - but appreciated and supported fully and wholeheartedly and understood the oceanic approach to give something back to midway in return for the many, many, many joyful moments we were fortunate to experience during our stay there. i happily cleaned up the beaches, i happily planted the grass, i happily collected 500+ :-) lighters and other plastic material, the weeds pulling however was a bit tough :-) but i survived !!! :-) even the plane on fire :-) best wishes, gunther

Blogs for Midway Atoll



Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is like a lei of foam in the middle of the North Pacific...a beautiful, special place. Not only are there albatross on Midway, but many other interesting wildlife on the land and in the sea. Please come along as we explore, thanks to these interesting blogs that are on the web!

FOAM: Friends Of Albatross on Midway by Barb

The video below was taken from the porch of Midway Atoll's Clipper House, a lovely place where our meals are served. If you look closely, you'll see the famous circular mating flight of some RTTR in the distance.

GO TO:

FOAM: Friends Of Albatross on Midway - <http://foam-friends-of-albatross-on-midway.blogspot.com/>



Red Tail Tropicbird Photo: Gunther Riehle

MIDWAY JOURNEY II – Plastic is Fantastic – Teaser | Midway By Jan Vozenilek

This entry was posted in General, Videos and tagged albatross, Chris Jordan, Jan Vozenilek, Joe Schweers, midway, midway atoll, midway journey, midwayj, ocean pollution, oil spill, photography, plastic, plastic pollution, pollution, ...

GO TO:

Midway - <http://www.midwayjourney.com/>



Plastic Trash on Midway Photo: Chris Jordan

What's Cookin' at Midway?

By Cindy Waddington (FOMA Secretary)

If you have had the good fortune of spending any time at Midway, you know that among the highlights of your visit (besides the birds) is dining at the Clipper House. First of all, the setting of the Clipper House is incomparable: situated just above North Beach, the location affords one of this planet's most sublime views! With apologies for waxing rhapsodic, the view of the lagoon and its azure water is breathtakingly beautiful.



The Clipper House is the place to meet and mingle with Midway residents and visitors during mealtimes. Additionally, anyone who has spent just a few days at Midway knows Pong--the chief chef. He and his incredibly hard-working crew produce 3 ono (delicious) buffets a day, which include at least one tasty (and usually very spicy) Thai dish!

Alongside the selection of entrees is the salad bar, which features greens and cucumbers grown just down the street in Midway's hydroponic garden. The hydroponic gardener is Chatchai "Tum" Janthet who studied plant science in his native Thailand and arrived on Midway two years ago. He has been increasing the hydroponic produce offerings ever since. Currently growing in the greenhouse are 5 species of lettuce, a variety of vegetables including choi sum, Chinese kale, Thai morning glory, green onions, arugula, cucumbers and sweet peppers. He also is tending to 4 varieties of tomato and recently planted cantaloupes, which, due to their size and weight, are propped up on little cardboard platforms.

The lettuce, Tum said, takes 38 days from seed to table and involves several stages. The lettuce seed is first planted in a cube of nutrients and spends 7 days on the seed table. The miniature lettuce plant is then moved

to the nursery where it spends the next 10 days. It then is relocated to "the big table" where it will grow for 20 days at which point it is harvested and heads to the Clipper House salad bar.

Tum said that he really enjoys his work as Midway's hydroponic gardener and likes the fact that there are no pesticides used in his operation. As he showed us around the greenhouse, you could see the pride he takes in his work and the role he plays in providing nutritious and fresh produce to Midway's residents and visitors.

What's New at Midway Mall?

By Cindy Waddington (FOMA Secretary)

Yes, Midway has a mall! It includes the library (open 24/7), a barbershop (open a couple evenings each week), the historic Midway Theater, the Friends of Midway Atoll gift shop and the Ship Store. The Ship Store is where Midway residents and visitors can purchase a snack, a bottle of wine and other sundries. The profits from the Ship Store go into the MWR (Morale, Welfare and Recreation) account which funds, among other things, special holiday events on



Midway. Until just recently, the Ship Store and the Friends of Midway Atoll gift shop were just around the corner from each other. In late March, the FOMA gift shop made the short move to an attractive, vacant space inside the Ship Store.

Before the move, FOMA relied on the generous goodwill of volunteers over the years to open the store and serve as sales clerks. Greg Schubert, Midway's invasive species specialist, and Merissa Brown, to name two, have spent countless hours

working in the store. The FOMA Board and Chugach recently worked out an arrangement whereby the Ship Store employees will now serve as clerks for both stores in exchange for a donation by FOMA to the MWR fund. The three employees are Chatchai "Tum" Janthet, Apirak "Rock" Ang-Yan and Wachirach "Petch" Rittichai. With the recent store move, the FOMA gift store is now open 6 days a week. Concurrently with the move, FOMA moved into the 21st century with the purchase of a Quicken Point-of-Sale system to track our sales. This matches the system already in use at the Ship Store (FOMA needed its own system to keep our funds separate). We are grateful to Tum, Rock and Petch for helping with the FOMA store. FOMA is also very appreciative of Greg Schubert for continuing to help in the store operations, and Darlene Olsen-Holst for her invaluable assistance during the transition to the new location.



Emerging Issues/Projects:

by John Klavitter

Acting Project Leader, Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

• Two civil engineers from Pacific Geotechnical (Honolulu, HI) and FWS regional office engineer, Mark Harris, visited the refuge for 4 days to investigate the cause of settling and cracking of the concrete slurry cap on top of the airfield lighting trench. New lighting and cables were installed in a trench in the summer of 2008 and the trench was capped with a concrete slurry. Within a few months the cap began to crack and settle. The engineer team hopes to determine the cause of slumping and cracking and recommend a solution.



Engineers checking soil compaction under trench.



• Three staff members from GeoEngineers arrived at the refuge on May 10 and spent a week here to complete an evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) for lead-contaminated soil. They took composite surface soil samples and soil samples at various depths and distances from buildings to determine the amount of leaded soil that needs to be remediated on the refuge and the cost.



Joey Hickey preparing for a 3-ft deep core sample to test for leaded paint outside of Delta Barracks.

Other Island News:

The supply vessel Kahana arrived on Midway June 12 with 40,000 gallons of jet fuel, 500 gallons of aviation gasoline, and 7 containers of supplies and materials for normal refuge operations, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects (for Officer Quarter Housing and Charlie Barracks). Unloading finished on June 13th and the vessel returned to Honolulu carrying 6 containers of material for recycling including 30 tons of steel.

Commemoration of the 68th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway by John Klavitter



The Commemoration of the 68th Anniversary of the Battle of Midway was a huge success. This was due to the incredible Midway Team that we have including Tracy Ammerman who led the charge. The island, monuments, event set up, food, logistics, program, interaction with visitors, customer service, and everything was fantastic. Every visitor that I talked to yesterday had a smile on their face and couldn't say enough about Midway and the commemoration. All this was only made possible from the exceptional work by Team Midway.

We had a Continental 737 fly in for the day with about 135 visitors including two American Battle of Midway Veterans, and one Japanese Battle of Midway Veteran.

The FOMA gift shop had sales of \$2700 which is fantastic for our little operation.



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