

Issue No. 6 (April 2010)

samudra

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SOS LEADERSHIP RENEWAL: GS LEOW PASSES BATON

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Issue No. 6 (April 2010)

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SOS LEADERSHIP RENEWAL

GS Leow Ching Chuan Passes Baton to Kam Soon Huat

SOS General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan stepped down as union chief, amid touching tributes from union leaders, shipping companies and members. He passed the baton to Mr Kam Soon Huat, a leader whom he has groomed.



Mr Leow has served the Union for 34 years – first as an Industrial Relations Officer and then as Executive Secretary in 1976 before becoming the seafarers' union General Secretary in 1982.

At the SOS leadership renewal cocktail held on 16 April at Grand Hyatt Singapore, Mr Lim Boon Heng, Minister, Prime Minister's Office, applauded Mr Leow for his perseverance in leading and connecting with the seafarers he served.

In his tribute, Mr Lim highlighted how Mr Leow had the difficult task of explaining to seafarers to opt for a more gradual increase in wages or risk out pricing themselves of the market; and how the leadership had to critically and objectively faced the problem of displaced seafarers and set up Seacare to provide alternative jobs for displaced seafarers.



"If SOS had not done that, then I think it would have been very difficult for the SOS leadership to be able to continue carrying the members onward," Mr Lim pointed out.

At Mr Leow's helm, SOS membership rose to the present 19,758 mark and has collective bargaining agreement with 762 ships. Seacare Co-operative Ltd, a social enterprise set up by the Union in 1994, now has 25 subsidiary companies and 8 associated companies with an annual turnover of nearly S\$30 million and a thousand employees.

"Singaporeans are fortunate to have trade union leaders like Brother Leow who are willing to sacrifice and give workers a better life." – Mr Lim Boon Heng



Also speaking highly of Mr Leow was Mr Lim Swee Say, NTUC Secretary-General, who described him as an "effective, passionate and committed leader who is highly worker-centric".

The hallmark of a truly effective union leader, said Mr Lim, is "someone who sticks it out and does his best in that position everyday, and at the same time, never forgetting that the day will come when he would really need to pass the baton on to the next person".

"For the last 20 years, he has been nurturing Kam Soon Huat to be his successor. This event is a testimony to the selfless and passionate unionist that Mr Leow is and that he is the sort of role model who reminds all of us that we should do our very best for the labour movement and in continuing to nurture new blood. In doing so, I believe we can grow from strength to strength for a long time to come." – Mr Lim Swee Say



Presentation of Token of Appreciation by Capt Francis Joseph, Chairman, Singapore Maritime Employers Federation



Presentation of Certificate of Appreciation by Capt Robert Walker, Vice Chairman, Singapore Branch of The Mission to Seafarers



MINISTER LIM BOON HENG SPEAKS OFF-THE-CUFF

About Brother Leow

Brother Leow's Empathy

"It is not easy working with a union for seafarers. You have to make the adjustment and learn to speak the same language in order to communicate with them. If you want to know how difficult it is, then this man can tell you. Brother Leow Ching Chuan persevered and was able to empathise with the members."

His Foresight

"SOS faced a problem – how, on the one hand, tell Singaporean seafaring members that they have lost their jobs even though their wage level is not considered very high. What do you do in that kind of situation? The leadership of SOS was able to look at this critically and objectively to decide a course of action."

That is why Seacare was formed – to provide alternative jobs for the displaced seafarers. If SOS did not do that, then I think it would have been very difficult for the SOS leadership to be able to continue carrying the members onward."

His Good Business Acumen

"Brother Leow Ching Chuan has made the right decision and was able to explain the rationale of why the mooting of Seacare would be beneficial to the members. It is not easy to be a trade unionist and then jump to do business. It is a completely different skill set. But I'm happy to say brother Leow Ching Chuan was able to do that well. That is why SOS today is a strong union; strong in terms of retaining its membership; at the same time also strong compassionately. There are not many unions that are able to do the same. It requires a strong set of skills to be able to adapt to the situation."

His Sacrifice

"I use this example to show how lucky Singaporeans have been to have trade union leaders to sacrifice; to bring themselves down to the same level of lower educated workers; well adjusted to speak the language of the man in the street. So I hope Singaporeans will appreciate our trade union leaders."



A TRIBUTE to Our Leader and Friend



Mr Leow Ching Chuan has played a pivotal role in building up SOS to where it is today, a flourishing trade union with a thriving investment organisation. When Mr Leow started his working career mostly with SOS in 1974, it was a toddling trade union with a few hundred members and hardly any funds. SOS was then very much dependent on the assistance of NTUC for its very survival.

Despite the poor outlook for SOS, Mr Leow stayed on and worked as an Industrial Relations Officer. Mr Leow's aptitude for networking with shipping management and seamen later gained him due recognition which led to his becoming Executive Secretary in 1976 and subsequently General Secretary in October 1982. As more SOS CBA ships and more members meant more funds for SOS, Mr Leow was focused on increasing SOS CBA fleet and membership right from the start of his General Secretaryship.

However, as General Secretary, Mr Leow was quick to recognise the beginning of a trend soon afterwards of declining number of Singapore seamen and stagnating number of SOS CBA ships. In 1989, Mr Leow and his Executive Committee had the SOS constitution amended to enrol foreign seamen on SOS CBA ships as members. Subsequently, the 137 SOS CBA ships and the 2,400-odd members in 1990 have increased to about 762 SOS CBA ships and 19,758 members today.

The plight of Singapore seamen displaced from their sea jobs, however, continued to trouble Mr Leow and his Executive Committee. In 1994, Mr Leow and his team decided to set up the Seacare Co-operative with the mission to help and benefit Singapore seamen and families through more work opportunities and appropriate investment projects. The Seacare

Co-operative now has 25 subsidiary companies and 8 associated companies with an annual turnover of nearly S\$30 million and a thousand employees.

The success of the Seacare Group as an investment vehicle of SOS is reflected in the ongoing project to build the Seacare Hotel to serve seafarers. Because of the vision of Mr Leow and his Executive Committee, SOS has now the added resources of the Seacare Group to help and benefit Singapore and other seamen. Various SOS membership benefit schemes are now in force to provide for membership rewards, provident fund management, medical treatment and consultation, training and lodging.

While fully committed to the managing of SOS and the Seacare Group, Mr Leow was still able to find time to serve on the boards of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore and various NTUC co-operatives and the Executive Council of the Singapore National Co-operative Federation. Moreover, Mr Leow has also been a member of the ITF Fair Practices Committee and the Asia-Pacific Seafarers' Regional Committee at various times during his term of office as the General Secretary of SOS. In so serving, Mr Leow has been able to cement the external relations of SOS with these other bodies.

In gratitude for the distinguished, dedicated and invaluable services that Mr Leow Ching Chuan has rendered throughout in various capacities to SOS and the Seacare Group, SOS is now proud and pleased to present him with a Token of Appreciation Award.



NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR KAM AND DANIEL; Leow serves as Executive Advisor

"I have been General Secretary for 28 years and I think it has been a sufficiently long stewardship of the post.

Brother Kam Soon Huat, who is now the Executive Secretary, will take over as General Secretary. Our EXCO member Brother Daniel Tan will be the new Executive Secretary. My appointment as Executive Advisor will help me to maintain continuity in the management and guide the development of SOS.

I have also been appointed by the Executive Committee of SOS to be the Executive Chairman of Seacare Co-operative Ltd (Seacare), the investment vehicle of SOS. I am looking forward to a challenging future as Seacare will become more involved in the both local and regional investments such as the adding of a hotel wing to the Seacare Building.

I take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for your past support during my term as General Secretary, whether it be on a business, fraternal or social basis. I hope the same support will be given to the new General Secretary and Executive Secretary of SOS."

– Mr Leow Ching Chuan

"It is a seamless leadership renewal process. We will continue the good work of the past years; to look into enhancing members' benefits and to improve our service. SOS has grown over the years. We now have 762 vessels covered by SOS CBA and we have a membership of close to 20,000. We will continue to progress and meet new challenges.

– Mr Kam Soon Huat

"The Union has entered another phase of its development.

We have come a long way. As Executive Secretary, I hope to contribute new perspectives and a fresh outlook to continue helping the union grow from strength to strength."

– Mr Daniel Tan



SINGAPORE ORGANISATION OF SEAMEN



Office Bearers and Executive Committee for the Term Ending 2011

Advisors

Lim Boon Heng
Grace Fu Hai Yien
Arthur Fong
Zulkifli B Mohammed

Executive Advisor

Leow Ching Chuan*

President

Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim

Vice Presidents

Bon Sheun Ping
Mohamad B Abu Bakar

General Secretary

Kam Soon Huat*

Executive Secretary

Daniel Tan Keng Hui*

Assistant Secretaries

Nazarudin B Nandok
See Boon Kwang

Treasurer

Lee Van Chong

Assistant Treasurer

Sim Hor Pheng

Ordinary Committee Members

Raj Moham
Raja Md Said B Raja Md Shafik
Lim Thizi Chee
Loh Suan Hin
Norani B Md Rais
Michael Tham Siang Hock*

Alternate Committee Members

Mohammed B Kodrasono
Kamis B Hussain
Tan Beng Kiat
Lim Eng Seng
Ho Yew Chun*
Chung Keng Meng*

Trustees

Leow Peng Kui
Major Abbas B Abu Amin
Ow Kee Heng

Internal Auditors

Ahmad B Hj Repahi
Tang Teng Lung

**with effect from 1 April 2010*



Many Voices, One Chorus

They all had something to say about Mr Leow Ching Chuan. Men and women from all ages; leaders and members from the shipping community; union leaders and members spoke of a man they held great respect for. From the many voices that are quoted here, there is only one chorus that resonates clearly – Mr Leow is a fair gentleman.



A FAIR GENTLEMAN

SOS Leadership Renewal Cocktail,
16 April at Grand Hyatt Singapore



"Mr Leow has an ability to set people at ease. There's something about his affable nature. From all my experiences and encounters with Mr

Leow, I've found him to be a deep thinker; a man of authentic sincerity; a listener; a man of humility. He talks to people on the ground. The success of SOS is very much due to Mr Leow's ability to sway support from the ground. He has amazing people skills, something young people can learn from. SOS has sailed through rough seas in the past. But no matter what challenges came along, nothing could faze Mr Leow. His successors walked along and sailed with him through the difficult times. Mr Leow has groomed them well. Under the new leadership of Mr Kam Soon Huat, SOS will ride the waves – **SOS will not miss a heartbeat!**"

Mr Arthur Fong, MP West Coast GRC and SOS Advisor



"To me, Mr Leow is more than just a union leader. He's a personal friend. I know him on a personal basis, I know his family and we've spent time together at each other's house. He is as he is, completely relaxed in front of people and a kind man. For 40 years, SOS has supported the work of Nautilus International in Singapore. SOS has always treated Nautilus as part of the family of SOS in the same degree to which our relationship have become."

Mr Willem Grooff, Representative, Nautilus International



"I've always known Uncle Leow as a man of gentlemanly conduct. It's amazing how he remembers everyone's name, regardless of rank or file. He's humble and has no airs. He listens to both sides and acts fairly to both shipping companies and members during CBA negotiations."

Mr Lim Poh Whee, Manager HR (Manning), AET Shipmanagement (S'pore) Pte Ltd



"Mr Leow is a fair man. He understands situations from the employers' perspectives as well. I remember my first CBA negotiation with SOS in 1990, when cost efficiency and demand for lower wage foreign crew was an issue of concern for local union members. Then, my encounter with Mr Leow led me to appreciate him as an understanding man, straightforward and a man of his word. Rapport with SOS has been good. All along, Mr Kam has been in the forefront of CBA negotiations alongside Mr Leow. I believe there will be no changes to the continued good relationship that we have with SOS. In fact, I hope for better cooperation in the future."

**Capt Francis Joseph, General Manager,
Herning Shipping Asia Pte Ltd**



"I have known Mr Leow for 24 years. He is both a good friend and a great colleague in the maritime community. My encounters with him have always been pleasant. I recall an incident about 4-5 years ago, during the SMS scheme inauguration in Manila where every leader of SOS was given an opportunity to be involved regardless of position. I was impressed with Mr Leow's kindness and spirit of inclusiveness. These are virtues of a generous man."

**Mr Ronald Lafeber, Director,
Gyron Shipping (Pte) Ltd**



"We had the honour of working closely with Mr Leow and SOS to safeguard the welfare of seafarers regardless of creed or nationality. SOS has played an active role in the shipping community and we appreciate the support shown. We look forward to greater partnerships with the new leadership."

**Capt Robert Walker, General Manager,
ASP Tanker Management Ltd and
Vice Chairman, Singapore Branch of
The Missions to Seafarers**



"I have known Mr Leow since 1986 and I really admire him. He is a really good businessman; a rare breed. He has the foresight to see potential in different niche markets. He does not just have business acumen but the ability to work with people with different skill sets."

**Mr Lim Tau Kok, Director,
PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd**



"Mr Leow has accomplished a lot for SOS and Seacare. For someone from a non-seafaring background, he was able to engage and have a big heart for the rank and file. We work with Kam very closely and we look forward to forging an even closer relationship between SMOU and SOS to represent our seafarers' interest globally."

**Ms Mary Liew, Executive Secretary,
Singapore Maritime Officers' Union
(SMOU)**



"I have a good impression of SOS especially Seacare group of companies which offers a wide range of services. Kam is always the right hand man of Mr Leow and we know him very well."

**Mr Masao Nakaya, Chairman & CEO,
NYK Shipmanagement Pte Ltd**





"Mr Leow is a very understanding and helpful friend – not just to SOS members but also to fellow unionists. He is always talking about his family and this shows that he leads a balanced work and family life. He has a soft spot for the less fortunate and always ensures that a big group of them gets invited to the union's Lunar New Year event."

**Mr Tan Chai Koon, General Secretary,
Metal Industries Workers' Union and
NTUC Central Committee Member**

"Mr Leow served in our welfare committee and played a very constructive contribution by running the drop-in centre for seafarers."

**Capt Khong Shen Ping,
Assistant Chief Executive,
Maritime and Port Authority
of Singapore**



"When we go to Mr Leow for help, he never says no to us. He is always there to support and to give advice. We have received a lot of kindness from him and it has been a very pleasant experience working with him. Mr Kam is a cool guy with a sharp mind. I look forward to work with him to build an even better relationship."

**Mr David See, Assistant Chaplain,
Singapore Branch of
The Missions to Seafarers**

Many Voices, One Chorus



"Mr Leow is more than a leader to me. He is a dear brother. By serving alongside him, I can attest that he is very committed to and passionate about the members' welfare. SOS is where we are today because of his foresight and wisdom. We are indebted in him."

Mr Bon Sheun Ping, Vice President, SOS



"Leow is a man of his word. He is fair in his dealings and respected by all of us."

Mr Norani B Md Rais, EXCO member, SOS

MOHAMED IDRIS SAYS "A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL"

ICSW South East Asia Regional Programme

"My stint as the Regional Coordinator has been an enlightening and fruitful experience. I am humbled to be given the opportunity to play a major role in improving the welfare of seafarers. As a former seafarer myself, I am acquainted with the struggles and hardships that seafarers face especially those who have had the misfortune of working in substandard ships and with unscrupulous ship owners. We must not give up doing good and doing it well. More can be done to enhance the welfare of seafarers worldwide.

I thank the ITF and ICSW for giving me the honour of being the first ICSW Regional Coordinator in South East Asia. I also thank each Regional Welfare Committee member, the missions and unions for their co-operation and support. Thank you for working selflessly alongside me to plant the seeds of setting up more Regional Welfare Committees, National Seafarers' Welfare Boards and local Port Welfare Committees to serve the seafarer community. Please continue to conduct more ship visits and establish more drop-in centres and offer welfare assistance for seafarers and their families.

Just as you have offered your friendship and support to me, I hope that you will offer the same partnership to my successor brother, I Dewa Nyoman Budiasa."

– Mr Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim

Thanks for
the Memories!



The 2007 ICSW Seafarers' Welfare Seminar in Singapore spurred off a four year programme that addresses seafarers' welfare issues in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. Cambodia is the latest addition to the network.

Mr Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim, then Vice President of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen, was appointed by ICSW and ITF Seafarers Trust to be the Regional Coordinator for this programme. Mr Mohamed Idris visited all the countries in the programme regularly and constantly partnered the Regional Welfare Committee members to call on government agencies and unions to develop high quality welfare services and facilities in as many ports in South East Asia (SEA) as possible. He was driven by the passion to have welfare services and facilities meeting a minimum standard throughout the region.

On 1 April 2010, Mr Mohamed Idris stepped down as SEA Regional Coordinator to make way for his successor, Mr I Dewa Nyoman Budiasa.

"Mohamed Idris has been a huge help in launching this programme. With the backing of his union, the Singapore Organisation of Seamen, he has made a

real difference in the way in which the programme is viewed in the region. He is able to talk from personal experience of seafaring and of working with welfare cooperatively in the port of Singapore. We all very much hope that he will continue to contribute in the meetings of the Regional Welfare Committee, and congratulate him on his new appointment as President of SOS."

– Mr Tom Holmer, ITF Seafarers' Trust

MORE MUST BE DONE

To Nip Piracy Problem

Union representatives, including SOS General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat, who met in Berlin on 15–19 March 2010 for the Fair Practices Committee (FPC) Meeting, passed a motion on piracy and its impact on seafarers and voted in favour of launching a new campaign against piracy.

In one voice, the unionists agreed that more needs to be done to protect the world's seafarers carrying out their duties serving on merchant ships and notes the adverse effects piracy is having on the retention and recruitment of seafarers.

At the meeting, calls were made upon all stakeholders to keep the seafarers abreast of current guidelines, such as Best Management Practices or circulars issued by competent international maritime authorities to advise them on anti-piracy awareness matters.

There were further calls upon the United Nations to resolve the economic and social instability in Somalia, as it is the only long term solution to piracy in the area. The unionists also agreed that the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) should coordinate with their international partners, both in labour and the commercial sector, to bring a strong and clear message to governments that more must be done. Further steps must be taken to protect mariners and their vessels.

As for the new "Time to Beat Piracy" campaign, which is backed by BIMCO, ICS, IFSMA, IMEC, IPTA, Intercargo, InterManager,

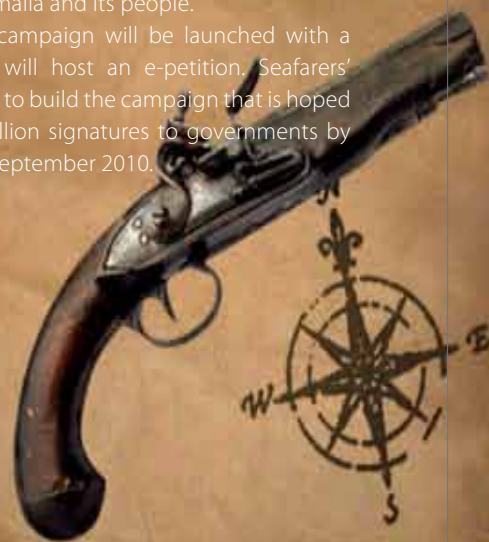
International Group of P&I Clubs, INTERTANKO, ISF, ITF, IUMI and SIGTTO, as well as national shipowners' associations and trade unions worldwide, it hopes to persuade all governments to commit the resources necessary to end the increasing problem of Somalia-based piracy.

The reality of the piracy situation is that seafarers' lives are at risk when they transport goods through areas that are daily growing more dangerous. Unless dramatic efforts are taken to address the problems of Somalia and its people and to grasp the nettle of confronting and prosecuting piracy, the situation is not going to change.

The campaign will call on governments to close the circle on protection of ships; to stand up and follow the example of those who are actively involved in combating the threat. It also urges governments to:

- Dedicate significant resources and work to find real solutions to the growing piracy problem.
- Take immediate steps to secure the release and safe return of kidnapped seafarers to their families.
- Work within the international community to secure a stable and peaceful future for Somalia and its people.

The "Time to Beat Piracy" campaign will be launched with a forthcoming website that will host an e-petition. Seafarers' delegates authorised the ITF to build the campaign that is hoped to deliver at least half a million signatures to governments by World Maritime Day on 23 September 2010.



PIRACY

Key Talking Point in Seafarers' Summits

The 27th Asian Seafarers' Summit Meeting (ASSM) and the 20th Norwegian – Asian Seafarers' Committee (NASCO) held at the Mariners' Home in Manila from 24 to 25 February 2010, strongly condemned the incidents of piracy and armed robbery in the gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia which had caused distress to seafarers on board vessels transiting through the area – threatening the security of this vital sea lane.

Hosted by the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), grave concerns that the actual dangers seafarers experience could no longer be overlooked were rife as the number of piracy and armed robbery incidents in the Gulf of Aden have steadily risen in recent months, mostly affecting Asian seafarers.

In response to the summit's adoption of resolutions to further educate Asian seafarers on piracy- SOS representatives Executive Secretary, Mr Kam Soon Huat and President, Mr Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim together with more than 50 delegates from 30 seafarer unions in Bangladesh, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Norway, Philippines, Russia, Singapore and Vietnam agreed unanimously that plans to push for more aggressive Asian government representations on the anti-piracy front were imperative.

Apart from discussing anti-piracy and armed robbery measures and keeping seafarers abreast of current guidelines issued by international maritime authorities on anti-piracy awareness and deterrents, topics ranging from Education and Training Schemes of Asian Seafarers, and

Flags of Convenience (FOC) Campaign Policy Review were touched upon as well. The summits proved an effective platform to air critical concerns, share best practices and strengthen cooperative ties among member unions.

The Asian summit was keynoted by Labour Undersecretary Mr Romeo Lagman who represented Hon. Marianito D. Roque, Labour Secretary from the Department of Labour and Employment while Norwegian ambassador to the Philippines, Mr Knut Solem joined NASCO participants in a dinner after the conference.



"A more concerted effort by the United Nations, governments and all stakeholders is needed to combat the ongoing piracy in the Gulf of Aden and the surrounding area. For the sake of the seafarers' safety and welfare, ships should only transit the area with the protection of navy vessels and have certain protection measures in place."

– Mr Kam Soon Huat, SOS General Secretary

Did You Know?

... If a ship is covered by the ITF's International Bargaining Forum collective agreement and it is due to sail into the designated High Risk Area, seafarers have the right to be repatriated at the company's expense before transiting the High Risk Area except when the ship transits only through the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC) patrolled by international navies.

... If a ship is sailing into the High Risk Area and is covered by the ITF IBF CA, seafarers are entitled to receive a bonus equal to 100% of the basic wage; and receive double compensation in case of death or injury. The bonus and enhanced compensation apply during the entire period of transit through the High Risk Area, regardless of whether the ship is inside or outside the IRTC.

... Similar provisions exist in the ITF TCC, ITF Standard, and many national collective agreements.

... The 'Best Management Practices' document outlines the procedures that companies and crews should follow in order to prevent ships from being attacked and hijacked. Crews should be aware that ships with low freeboard, traveling at low speeds, in good weather, where the crew and ship are not prepared, and where the ship has not reported to naval authorities are at the greatest risk of being captured.

... Ships transiting the high risk area must report their movements to the naval authorities and follow their instructions, beginning 4–5 days before they enter the high risk area. Extra lookouts should be posted. All vessels must use the International Recommended Transit Corridor (IRTC). Ships reporting in will be given the latest advice on how to avoid piracy attacks.

... Vessels whose full speed is below 18 knots should stay out of the High Risk Area, presently 400 nautical miles off the Somali coast.

... Most hostages are not subject to violence if they cooperate with their captors, although they may be held hostage for long periods of time in very difficult conditions. It is important for seafarers to talk about hostage experiences after they are released (to the relevant authorities, to their unions, and to their companies) and to accept whatever medical and psychological assistance may be offered.

... The majority of hijackings have occurred on high-risk ships (with low full speed and low freeboard), which have not reported in to the naval authorities before transiting the area. In many cases, ships are not adequately manned, and crew are not properly trained and prepared. Some seafarers have reported that their pay and other employment benefits were terminated whilst they were held hostage. In many cases, owners have provided only minimal support to seafarers after they have been released.

On the other hand, some owners have been very diligent in protecting their crew from piracy. It is ITF policy and the policy of the maritime industry to oppose having armed guards on board ships.

Source: June 2010 edition of ITF Piracy Update

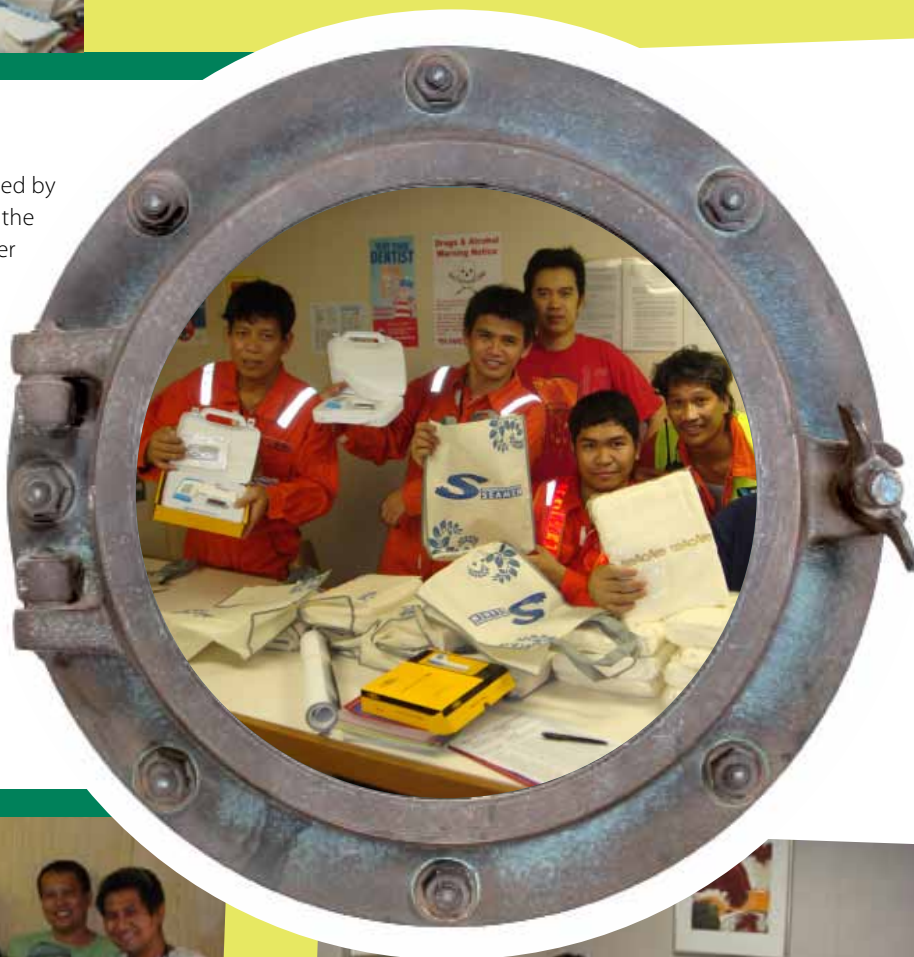
SHIP VISITS ENLIGHTEN



Mr Mohamad B Abu Bakar, SOS Industrial Relations Officer, called on four vessels owned by A. P. Moller Singapore Pte Ltd, Pacific International Lines and Thome Ship Management Pte Ltd in April and May 2010.

The seafarers were delighted and enlightened by the visits when Mr Mohamad explained to the crews of shipping companies covered under the SOS Collective Bargaining Agreements about the Seafarers' Provident Fund – briefing on the finer points of how to go about tracking and accessing their account contributions with their thrift account numbers, and demonstrating how to perform basic transactions, download forms and claim monies corresponding to the various age categories.

The visits rounded off with distribution of digital forehead thermometers and Seacare towels.





Held over two days from 24–26 March 2010 in Phuket, Thailand, NTUC had their Membership Workplan Seminar to work through and reassess its membership recruitment, retention, relationships and community building initiatives which saw representatives from the various NTUC affiliated unions in attendance.

SOS was represented by Ex-officio Mr David Sim, Chairman Mr Nazarudin B Nandok and Admin Secretary Ms Julia San of the SOS Membership and Organising Committee.

Union representatives zeroed in on strategies to meet the target 600,000 membership mark set for 2010; shared recruitment success stories and how they overcame obstacles with regard to recruitment and membership retention; as well as brain stormed on new ideas to improve recruitment and membership benefits.



Mr David Sim and Mr Nazarudin participate in a group discussion

In learning how NTUC hopes to achieve their target, the trio gathered fresh insights on newly devised membership benefits and planned to employ some of these ideas during SOS' recruitment drives.

Asked what benefitted her most from the seminar, Ms Julia San had this to say: "I benefitted much from the discussions and brainstorming sessions. Through these, I was able to leverage on and adopt the collective knowledge and expertise of others to look at how we can grow union membership and at the same time continue providing value to our existing members."

To retain members, participants discussed about offering perks such as preferential discounts and privileges, Member Exclusives, Union Specials (i.e. retirement fees, long service awards) and benefits like subsidised movie tickets and more.

Looking beyond conventional communication methods, other strategies explored included exploiting communication modes through new media platforms – Facebook and Twitter and making services like the update of members' particulars and promotional updates conveniently available via email, SMS, and websites.

These together with a dedicated membership hotline, member outreach talks, Member Get Member schemes, road shows, Joint Union Recruitment Drives, Certified Recruiters' Courses, new standards for service excellence among a plethora of other initiatives, meant that the union representatives were concerted in their bid to employ a maximally integrated system to meeting its membership target. Full steam ahead!

SOS Calendar

May 2010



Visit to Welfare Homes

Aug 2010

SOS/Seacare
Members' Night



June 2010

Family Outing



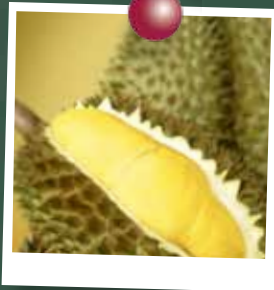
Sep 2010

Hari Raya Celebration



July 2010

Durian Trip to
West Malaysia



World
Maritime Day
Celebration



2010

October 2010

SOS Study Grant
Presentation Ceremony



of Events

Nov 2010

Deepavali Celebration



Visit to Welfare Homes



2011

Dec 2010

39th SOS/16th Seacare Anniversary Dinners

Year End Reception for SOS Filipino Members

Year End Reception for SOS Indonesian Members



Feb 2011

SOS/Seacare Hong Bao Presentation cum Lunar New Year Celebration



Jan 2011

Tea Session with Members



Mar 2011

SOS/Seacare Members' Night



'APPROACHING 55'

Attended by 47 members and staff, an in-house talk held on the 19 of March 2010 at Club @52 piqued the interest of many.

A representative of Financial Services Consumers Association (FISCA), a consumer focused, non-profit organisation, spoke on the aims of improving financial literacy and consumer protection.



Entitled "Approaching 55: A Check List of Financial Matters You Should Know About", the presentation addressed salient issues faced by members in their fifties: i.e. 'What is Good House Keeping', 'How Long will One Live?', 'How Long will One's CPF Last?', 'Clearing Up some Investment Misunderstandings',

'FISCA's Investments Messages', 'How Not to Lose Money', 'Healthcare Insurance', 'Keeping Mind and Body Active' and 'Knowing Oneself'.

The Advance Medical Directive (AMD) – a signed legal document to the doctor to opt out of extraordinary life-sustaining treatment in the event one becomes terminally ill or unconscious was touched on as well for the benefit of members and staff.

SOS Members and staff learned the differences between various combinations of CPF LIFE plans and their trade-offs between monthly payouts and bequests, CPF withdrawals, the importance of drafting a will, making healthcare provisions, picking up sound investment tips and ageing gracefully by exercising, eating in moderation and keeping oneself active.



MEMBERS' NIGHT AND DIALOGUE SESSION WITH GS

The dialogue session on 27 March 2010 was organised mainly to announce to members the renewal of SOS Leadership i.e. Mr Leow Ching Chuan relinquishing his appointment as General Secretary and the new appointments of Mr Kam Soon Huat and Mr Daniel Tan as General Secretary and Executive Secretary respectively. Mr Leow assumes his new role as an Executive Advisor to the Union. The new appointments apply with effect from 1 April 2010.

The new leaders thanked the contribution and services rendered by Mr Leow during his tenure as the General Secretary and pledged to continue to steer the union to greater heights. The session was also an opportune time for union and member to interact and catch up over a relaxed dinner.

The evening progressed with light entertainment and closed with a lucky draw for members.





Seacare Focus



To take a big leap forward into the preschool education market in Asia, Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd sealed a joint-venture with Seabay Innovation Centre Pte Ltd, the company known for its innovative pre-school curriculum and excellent teacher training in China.



SEACARE OKIKI P-HUB SETS ITS SIGHT ON ASIA



One of Seabay Innovation Centre's most popular initiatives is its two highly popular OKiKi China kindergartens, located in Xu Hui and Pu Tong in Shanghai, that offer high end, high quality pre-school education to children between the ages of two and six.

"Within 28 months, our two kindergartens were given the top Grade One ranking by the China government. This is the first time a pre-school centre has taken such a short time to acquire the recognition," highlighted Mr Forest Yuan, Chairman, OKiKi China.

The fame spread quick and wide and soon parents, most of whom are expatriates working in Shanghai, were queuing up to enrol their children. OKiKi China now has a "happy problem" – the centres have a wait list of 350 children.

One of the reasons for its success is its cohort of pre-school educators. Thirty of the teachers are from countries such as the United Kingdom, United States of America and Australia with many years of master class kindergarten teaching experience.





Every Kid counts



"Our teachers are of different nationalities. Their innovative teaching methods and learning activities for children add colour and depth to our curriculum." – Mr Forest Yuan



Mr Yuan also pointed out that full-time physicians, nurses, and dieticians are employed to meet the health, hygiene and safety needs of the children.

The pre-school's emphasis on fostering in every child healthy attitudes, spontaneity and joy through experiential learning go down well with the parents. This non-conformist philosophy is well embodied in the school's tagline "Learn with Laughter".

Another much talked about initiative of OKiKi China is its collaboration with East China Normal University (ECNU), one of the top universities in China, to train distinctive teachers. The Raffles Innovation Centre engaged the highly respected Professor Yan Shui Jin as its principal, which instantly raised the profile and prominence of the Centre.

Through another collaborative effort with East China Normal University, OKiKi China's plan is to launch a kindergarten franchise in China and set up 300 pre-schools nationwide by the end of 2013.

The joint venture with Seacare Manpower Services, which birthed Seacare OKiKi p-Hub (S) Pte Ltd, adds a new and dynamic dimension to pre-school education. This joint venture targets regions in Asia. Mr Leow Ching Chuan is the Chairman of Seacare OKiKi p-Hub (S) Pte Ltd; while Mr Yuan, its Chief Executive Officer.

One of the exciting plans of Seacare OKiKi p-Hub (S) Pte Ltd is its Life Innovation Training Centre which uses Singapore as a base to train pre-school professionals in Asia through seminars, exchange programmes with renowned pre-school campuses in countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia and premium pre-school educators training curriculum.

"There is an immense need for premium pre-school educators training. This is our niche area and with our established network of educators and universities working with us, Seacare OKiKi p-Hub will go places and do its part in raising the quality of pre-school education in the region. It is a high calling which we are confident of fulfilling," said Mr Yuan. "And this is just a start."



SEACARE MANPOWER EMPOWERS THROUGH ICT



"I was unfamiliar and terrified of computers and IT. Now I can type documents and construct emails! I practise at home by tracking my household expenditures on Microsoft Excel. The way in which our instructors helped us understand these concepts was excellent. I was surprised at how easy it was to grasp and am very encouraged by my new found skills! If I am able to do this, any greenhorn can! Thank you. I am no longer afraid."

– Ms Gulam Kader Malimar, Membership Service Representative, NTUC

Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd has been actively organising training and career development programmes to help workers achieve their potential and raise personal levels of effectiveness at work through professional skills development.

To build on positive feedback received in past training sessions, Seacare Manpower was pleased to offer yet another career enhancing course – the "WSQ Employability Skills Systems (ESS) Workplace Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Applications (Operations) Course" conducted by NTUC Learning Hub from 13 to 15 March 2010.





Targeted at workers registered with Seacare Manpower, the course touched on the use of electronic storage media, selecting and using ICT tools to accomplish tasks as well as employing application software to create simple electronic messages. Topics covered also included a range of ICT applications commonly used at the workplace, the use of the Internet, and computer and communication tools in the workplace.

Funded by the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR), the three day course saw school administrative executives, clerks, officers, as well as library and teacher assistants learn about

electronic filing systems, email house-keeping, basic send and retrieval functions in electronic mail, system tools, internet functions, advantages and disadvantages of networks, differences between Local Area Networks (LAN) and Wide Area Networks (WAN), hardware used in networking, and standard network maintenance procedures.



Held concurrently at two locations – NTUC Trade Union House in Bras Basah and International Plaza at Anson Road, the 64 participants were split into four classes of 16 participants each to ensure optimum instructor-participant interaction. Participants were each rewarded with a Statement of Attainment (SOA) from the Workplace Development Agency (WDA) for having successfully completed the course.

"It was a good refresher course for me. This course drilled into the detailed fundamentals of ICT. It was very concise. I find the course a very apt starting point for everyone and anyone working in an office environment since it gives one the confidence to handle scanners, printers and emailing with ease. After this, many of us emerged less confused, less fearful, more efficient, proficient and independent."

– Mr Tan Wei Hsien, IT Trainer,
MacPherson Secondary School





The Sunshine Garden 2, another residential project of Seacare Properties (Philippines) Pte Ltd, has seen more than 50% of its units sold.

Seacare Properties (Philippines) Pte Ltd General Manager, Mr David Shoo credited its popularity to the condominium's centralised location and proximity to an array of facilities for the residents. The quality of the Sunshine Garden 1 project which had earlier received rave reviews, got potential buyers for Sunshine Garden 2 sitting up to take notice.

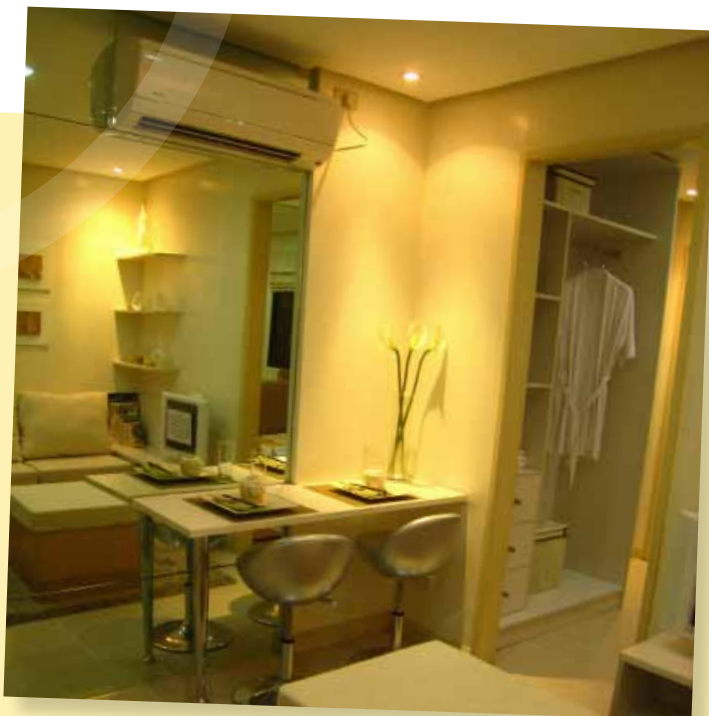
"The progressive sale of units thus far is testament to Seacare Properties' reputation as a developer in Manila. We are glad to have had established the confidence of buyers in our pilot housing project – Sunshine Garden 1. The locality and pricing of units for Sunshine Garden 2 continue to remain as attractive plus points," said Mr Shoo.





SUNSHINE GARDEN 2

50% SOLD!



With Seacare Properties (Philippines) Pte Ltd as the co-developer of the project with Pan Asia International Sunshine Garden Inc, the Sunshine Garden 2 project boasts of seven storeys of 206 residential units comprising 1/2/3 bedroom types and six commercial units.

Among the host of facilities to be provided at the Mandaluyong condominium are a landscaped rooftop garden area and function hall, a mini children's playground, commercial areas, a resident lounge with wi-fi hotspot, fitness centre, 24/7 round-the-clock security and a basement car park.

Construction work is undertaken by Huayou Construction Development Philippines Corporation - a subsidiary company of the Qingdao Construction Group and holder of Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) Double "AA" license. Construction began in February 2010 and the project is scheduled for completion in mid 2011.



Signing of the MOU by Mr Kam Soon Huat, Executive Director of Seacare Thrift and Ms Sarah Tan, Director General Manager of WSTC

4 May 2010 signalled a milestone for Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd and Wuhan University of Technology – Skaugen Training and Consulting Co. Ltd (WSTC) as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the two bodies.

SEACARE THRIFT REP OFFICE IN WUHAN, CHINA

The MOU paves the way for a Seacare Thrift Representative Office to be set up in China to better attend to the welfare of SOS PRC Members and contribute to the wider maritime industry. This is accomplished through its role as a liaison office, assisting to answer enquires of PRC members as well as serve as a contact point between SOS and PRC members.

The Seacare Thrift Representative Office will operate out of the WSTC. An existing staff from WSTC will serve as the new Seacare Thrift Representative in Wuhan, China.

The Representative will play key roles in assisting with logistical arrangements for SOS or Seacare events in China, coordination work for current SOS schemes – Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS), the Seafarers' Provident Fund (SPF), Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme (SSS) and Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) and providing assistance for future schemes.

By monitoring the feedback of SOS PRC members and effectiveness of the Seacare Thrift Representative Office, Seacare Thrift looks to expand its operations in the near future to efficiently cater to the needs of SOS members and serve the wider maritime industry.





SEACARE THRIFT REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE, P.R.C.

SEACARE THRIFT SETS UP OFFICE IN WUHAN



NEED ASSISTANCE ON SEACARE WELFARE SCHEMES IN CHINA?

To serve SOS foreign members in China better, Seacare Thrift has set up a representative office in Wuhan.

Members who require assistance on the Seacare Maritime Training Scheme, Seafarers' Provident Fund Scheme, Seacare Medical Scheme and/or Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme can get in touch with us at our new office.

Our Seacare Thrift Representative Office is located at:

**Wuhan University of Technology –
Skaugen Training and Consulting Co., Ltd**

**688 You Yi Da Dao, Wuchang
Yu Jia Tou Campus (south),
Wuhan University of Technology,
Wuhan 430063, China**

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Email: thrift_wuhan@seacare.com.sg