

December 2004 + January 2005

samudra

A Bi-Monthly Publication of the Singapore Organisation of Seamen and Seacare Co-operative Limited

We Serve
with **CARE**



Seacare Maritime Medical Centre
**New Premises to
Meet New Needs**

Mita(P) No. 154/03/2005

December 2004 + January 2005

samudra

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The Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS), a special medical scheme presented by the SOS, will take effect from 1 March 2005 for the purpose of providing its local and foreign members with medical benefits and shipping management staff with free healthcare talks.

The good news was unveiled at the official opening of the new premises of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) on 27 January 2005. *(Please turn to Pg 22 - 24 for the report.)*

Union General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan said: **The Seacare Medical Scheme is in pursuit of the objectives of SOS and Seacare in providing better welfare benefits to our members.**

The Scheme consists of three tailor-made components:

Component A caters to SOS local members who will enjoy free health screening once every four years at the SMMC.

SOS Launches Seacare Medical Scheme

Component B is shaped for SOS foreign members and/or their dependents who will enjoy medical related services at no cost at affiliated clinics of the SMMC.

Component C is for management staff of shipping companies that participate in the SMS. They are eligible to attend talks conducted by the Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd at no cost.

The first group of SOS foreign members to reap the benefits of the SMS is our Filipino member who serves on board a vessel covered by the Union Collective Bargaining Agreement and whose employer is participating in the SMS. From 1 March 2005, the Scheme would entitle him and his dependents to a host of free medical benefits, namely, medical consultation, basic medical examination including complete blood count, stool examination, urinalysis, ECG, chest x-ray and tooth extraction without surgery.

The Scheme covers dependents ie wife and unmarried children below 18 years old of married qualified SOS Filipino Member as well as the parents and unmarried siblings below 18 years old of single qualified SOS Filipino Member. Each family is entitled to a maximum of four visits per month with a maximum of one medical benefit per visit per day. Any unconsumed entitlements are not allowed to be carried forward to the following month or exchanged for cash.

The free medical benefits are available at the affiliated clinics of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd, namely, SMMC/Galenus Clinic and SMMC/Micah Medical Clinic. Both clinics are situated in Manila.



A Qualified SOS Filipino Member is required to complete a Nomination Form which is obtainable from the Crewing Agent or Employer. The completed Nomination Form must be submitted to Seacare International Phils. Inc. through the Crewing Agent or Employer.

Once his Nomination Form is approved, the qualified SOS Filipino Member will be notified via post by his last registered address. He and his dependents must produce either one of the following documents at the affiliated clinics:

- Birth Certificate
- Passport
- School Identification Card
- SSS ID
- Voter's ID

The contact in Philippines is as follows:

Seacare International Phils. Inc.

4th Floor Ruby Ann Building
911 San Andres St.
Corner Leon Guinto St.
Malate, Manila, Philippines

For more information on the SMS for SOS Filipino Members, please contact **Ms Aimee Sañosa** at **(632) 521 6839** or email **smsph@seacare.com.sg**.

Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd

165 Tanjong Pagar Road
#04-19 The Amara
Singapore 088539
Tel: (65) 6222 7728
Fax: (65) 6224 6387

Affiliated Clinics of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd

The free medical benefits for a Qualified SOS Member and his dependents are available at the following affiliated clinics of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd:

SMMC/Galenus Clinic Inc.

3rd Floor Ferguson Tower
M.H. Del Pilar cor.
A Flores St.
Ermita, Manila 1000
Philippines
Tel: (632) 528 4185
Fax: (632) 536 9716

Operating Hours:

8.00am to 5.00pm (Mon - Fri)
8.00am to 12.00pm (Sat)

**SMMC/Micah Medical Clinic
and Diagnostic Laboratory**

3rd Floor Marc Building
1971 Taft Avenue
Malate, Manila
Philippines
Tel: (632) 536 5289 / 536 5900
Fax: (632) 536 5280

Operating Hours:

8.30am to 5.30pm (Mon - Fri)
8.30am to 12.30pm (Sat)

SOS Workshop 2005 - Review, Refresh, Remap

In a four-day workshop held in Manila, the Philippines, from 6 to 9 January 2005, SOS leaders and staff reviewed, refreshed and remapped work plans for the new financial year 2005/2006. The 'round table' which was chaired by Union General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan, brought together 54 Executive Committee and Standing Committee members and staff.

Tapping on the expertise and knowledge of the invited guest speaker, Mr Teo Kai Hoe, an IR Consultant for NTUC IR Department, the paper on 'Outsourcing', a buzzword in business and management, and other topics like Company Restructuring and Employment Act Section 18, were particularly relevant to all who attended. This annual conference also saw the introduction of the Seacare Medical Scheme and the new Seacare Mission Statement as well as workplan on the major events by Union Chief Mr Leow.

The following workplans for the Financial Year 2005/2006 were presented by the respective committee chairpersons and managers:

				
Mr Kam Soon Huat Industrial Relations	Mr Mohd Idris International Relations	Mr David Sim Membership & Organising	Mr Anthony Chan Welfare & Community Services	
				
Mr Koh Tak Yang Information Technology	Ms Jacquelyn Lam Publication & Corporate Development	Ms Sia Ai Ngoh Finance & Investment	Mr David Shoo Seafarers Provident Fund	Ms Mariana Angel Training & Skills Development

Inspired and challenged by the talks, participants deliberated and mulled over the work plans presented for the new financial year. The following pages highlight the committees' forward-thinking and exciting plans.

The highlights of the workshop included the opening of the Seacare International Philippines Incorporated as well as a visit to SMMC/Galenus Clinic.

SOS Key Action Plans and



Industrial Relations

1. To continue to refine and improve the SOS Collective Agreement
2. To monitor the review of ITF policy on national flag ships
3. To study the impact of the ILO Consolidated Maritime Labour Convention which will come into force in 2006
4. To develop Bilateral Agreements with Fraternal Seafarers Unions

Seafarers Provident Fund

1. To continue to promote the SPF Scheme
2. To review the structure and operation of the scheme

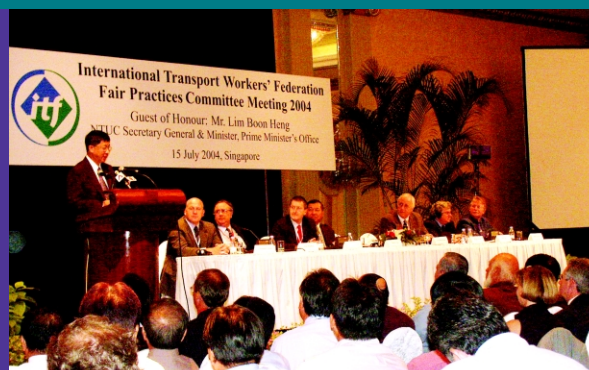


Membership & Organising

1. To strive to achieve a membership target of 12,500
2. To look into the extension of the validity of local membership cards to 4 years so as to be in line with electoral registration
3. To assist in the implementation of the Seacare Medical Scheme
4. To conduct a Membership & Organising Workshop in July 2005

International Relations

1. To review the Union's policy on bi-lateral relationship with fraternal seafarers' unions, particularly the ITF affiliates in countries of domicile of beneficial owners of ship
2. To continue to work closely with NTUC IAC and other Singapore ITF affiliates on issues relevant to Singapore
3. To continue to participate in all relevant meetings of ITF, ILO and IMO and ITF FOC campaign including the ITF Asia/Pacific Action Week



Welfare & Community Services

1. To look into the revision of the standard rates of fees that are chargeable to members and their dependents for participation in Union's social activities.
2. To organise 12 social activities
3. To organise 2 welfare home visits in May & December 2005
4. To conduct a Welfare & Community Services Workshop in July 2005

Direction for the Year Ahead

Training & Skills Development

1. To continue to reach out to members on training and skill development opportunities
2. To continue to feature relevant and informative courses in Samudra
3. To source for appropriate leadership development courses for committee members and staff
4. To organise in-house training courses for members, committee members and staff
5. To actively explore the various channels of funding which the Union can tap into so as to augment the Union's training fund



Publication & Corporate Development

1. To publish six issues of Samudra
2. To publish Seacare Annual Report 2005 and Corporate Planner and/or Calendar 2006
3. To maintain an up-to-date mailing list
4. To constantly work with Seacare Evolution Pte Ltd to work out ways to improve the Union's websites
5. To conduct a Publication & Corporate Development Workshop in second half of the year



Information Technology

1. To continue to leverage on new technology to effect greater efficiency and cost savings for SOS
2. To ensure SOS I.T. usage complies with the new copyright laws as of 1 January 2005
3. To develop new SOS I.T. Programmes



Finance & Investment

1. To review the FY04/05 performance against budget
2. To work closely with the Cost Cutting Committee on measures to trim down expenses
3. To consolidate the Union's fund



Continual education is the key to rejuvenating the skills of transport workers in this globalised economy. Through its various sectional campaigns and programmes, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has been making an endeavour to transform the attitudes, approach and organisational culture of transport unions across the world to meet the challenges of a rapidly globalising international economy.

This year, the ITF Educators' Seminar on Globalisation Issues was held in Singapore over a five-day period between 17 to 21 January. Such seminars are a testament of their dedication to the advancement of independent and democratic trade unionism, and to the defence of fundamental human and trade union rights. The seminar was opened by Mr Mahendra Sharma, Deputy Regional Secretary of ITF Asia/

ITF Educators' Seminar on Globalisation Issues



Pacific Region and facilitated by two other esteemed staff from the ITF Asia/Pacific Secretariat Office.

Participating unions included unions from the Asia-Pacific Region such as Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia and Singapore. Singapore was represented by unionists from Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS), Singapore Port Workers' Union (SPWU) and National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU). SOS delegates

led by Vice-President, Mr Mohd Idris were Alternate EXCO member Mr Michael Tham and staff member Ms Mariana Angel.

A wide array of issues such as Education on HIV and AIDS, Transportation Restructuring, Transport Workplace Trends, Globalisation issues and youth participation in leadership positions were discussed. In particular, the issue of continual training of union members also took centre-stage during discussions. Delegates were given thought on carrying out effective training sessions back in their unions.

For Ms Mariana Angel, who organises training and refresher courses for SOS leaders and members, this seminar certainly came in handy. She relishes especially, at being introduced to better methods of training and hopes to apply what she has learnt.

In addition to discussions, delegates were engaged in presentations and activities such as role-playing to bring across each theme effectively.

Said Mariana, I find such seminars really interactive. We were so involved in the session that we couldn't help continuing our discussion even during lunch time! More importantly, having heard union leaders share their experiences has been useful. We learn from them the do's and don'ts, which in turn enhances our own effectiveness. I hope there will be more of such training seminars to come!

"Education is the best provision for old age." So said Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher. Not that Mr Jainal Atan is old. He is all, but 34 years of age, and exudes a calm and maturity attained through the many years of seafaring.

An SOS member since the early nineties, Mr Jainal was a seafarer for more than five years, working as a rating on board a cable ship till recently. And right now, it's back to school for Mr Jainal.

"I was a little apprehensive initially, even doubting myself if I can make it through. I can still remember the first day of school, when I stepped through the gates and found myself staring at teenagers attending lectures. I think it was more like a culture shock to me," recalled Mr Jainal.

School is Singapore Polytechnic, where Mr Jainal is attending classes for a Certificate of Competency in Class Three Deck Officer.

In fact, Jainal is the only Singaporean! Of course, what's more important is that despite their cultural differences, they co-operate and work together in discussions and teamwork. And this is what we advocate, that in seafaring, we progress as one community and we should not allow differences to hamper us."

Each class is conducted seminar-style, where Captain Lee encourages two-way communication. His style of teaching is open and interactive. He



Back to School

"SOS has been very kind to us indeed. I never have to worry about training costs or whatsoever, because they always lend a helping hand to members," said Mr Jainal gratefully. It was also through the SOS Training Department that Mr Jainal received his STCW 95 Certification, which is now compulsory for seafarers to renew their seamen registration card and continue their Ordinary Membership (OD) with the Union.

At 34, Mr Jainal is one of the older students in the class, the oldest being 42. Ask Captain Lee Sang Chiat, the lecturer of Mr Jainal's course, about the pressures of teaching a class of students who are just slightly younger than he is. "No difference at all. I just treat them like any other students. They are here to upgrade and learn, so it shouldn't matter whether I'm younger or older. They come here with aspirations, and I see it as my responsibility to encourage and assist them in fulfilling their goals. Though there are stringent conditions, but as seafarers, they are adaptable so it shouldn't be too hard coping."

Captain Lee stands humble amongst his long list of credentials and seafaring experience. Whether it is being a Captain at sea, a superintendent or marine manager on shore, Captain Lee has almost been there, done that. "Except being a lecturer," he said. "That's why I'm here today, to spread my knowledge and experience."

He adds jovially, "Sometimes I even feel that my class is like a mini united nations, with students predominantly from other countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Pakistan and mostly from India.

welcomes any questions and is clear in his delivery of the lesson. As a result, the students are participative and discussions within the tutorial are fast and furious. Humorous yet disciplined, Captain Lee certainly enjoys good rapport with his class.

Reflected Mr Jainal, "I agree with Captain Lee, that spoon-feeding should not be part of the learning process. This concerns our future, and if we don't take charge of our own learning, the ones to lose out will be ourselves. For instance, speaking up and being not afraid to ask questions is important. It's important to understand that the one at loss will be ourselves, so why be embarrassed that others will laugh at you?"

Now Mr Jainal never says "I can't". He tells himself,

Give your best and it's all just mind over matter. I'm thankful that my wife and family are supportive. My family is what keeps me going, and all these will enable me to provide a better life for them. I'm glad I followed my colleague, Asman's advice. It was he who encouraged me to sign up for the course and upgrade myself. Because with more skills and knowledge, only then am I capable of handling more responsibilities. I sincerely wish to thank him.

Ten modules, 400 contact hours and conducted over 20 months. It is no piece of cake for our union leaders, who take the lead and attend courses to upgrade themselves. Then again, Mr Abdul Rahim Mohamed and Mr Richard Seow can have their cake and eat it too!

Juggling between work and study is no mean feat. Ask Mr Rahim, and he will tell you that time management is especially crucial for him. Mr Rahim clocks in a six-day work week, from eight in the morning till nine in the night and the occasional Sunday hours as a site supervisor in the construction industry. He still finds time to do sports with friends and colleagues, and spends time with his family. On top of that, he makes time for revision and homework. **I tell myself that sweetness will only follow after you have tasted bitterness. Thankfully, I'm still coping alright.**

Both Mr Rahim and Mr Seow are pursuing the Diploma in Employment Relations (DER) offered by the Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies and the Singapore Institute of Management (SIM). Having completed their Advanced Certification in Industrial Relations (ACIR), it was only natural that they signed up for the Diploma course.



The Diploma in Employment Relations is specially designed to be practice-oriented for personnel who have responsibilities or an interest in the industrial relations and human resource management functions such as trade union leaders and members, industrial relations officers and more. Apart from lectures and reading assignments, students participate in individual and small group work using case studies, discussions, short assignments and projects.

Said Mr Seow, **This course is certainly relevant to union work. We study about Labour Studies, MOM Laws and what the Workmen Compensation is all about.** Mr Rahim agreed. "Only after we understand the workings of the system and the laws can we help members. What's more, I've improved my written language skills and understand

what business communication is all about. With each course that I signed up for, I have gained more confidence in myself."

Without a doubt, these two gentlemen are no strangers to training courses. To name a few, Mr Seow has completed a Building Construction Safety Supervisor Course and Motor Vehicles Mechanic Course whereas Mr Rahim has to his credit, training in the operation of various machineries such as forklift, plant machinery, toner and mobile cranes.

Being two of the older students in the class does not dampen their fighting spirits at all. They even organised study groups to do revisions together. "No problem!" was 52 year old Mr Seow's answer. "I've done so many other courses before; I treat this as just another one where I can gain more knowledge." At 40, Mr Rahim feels that he is still brimming with energy and to not



Leadership Training (DER Course)

put it to good use would be a shame indeed. "Isn't it better this way than to idle the time away? I know that only by upgrading myself can I give my family a better life."

In fact, both Mr Seow and Mr Rahim do not plan to stop after this course. Mr Seow is interested in teaching and will be looking out for opportunities to attend teaching-related courses. Mr Rahim is flexible about his options. "At the end of the day, I think what is important is that we don't stop learning. Besides, the more courses you attend, the more options you have. You may not know when these will come in handy."

Interested? You may log on to <http://www.ntuc.org.sg/otcstitute/index.html> or call Mariana at 6379 5671 for more information.

Membership has Its Rewards!

Hey you members out there! Want to know how NTUC rewards you for your membership? Check it out!

Sound Of Music

Set amidst the splendour of the Austrian Alps and based on a true story of the budding romance between Maria and Captain Von Trapp, this beloved classic has won the hearts of audiences the world over since its Broadway debut in 1960.

Be dazzled and truly inspired by the world's most beloved musical, live at the Esplanade from 8 to 30 April 2005 at 20% off regular ticket prices, exclusively for Union Members!

Orchid Country Club - Romantic Getaway for Two



Romance your loved one in the idyllic atmosphere conjured up by magnificent sunsets, lush greenery and soothing tranquillity. At Orchid Country Club, a Romantic Getaway for Two for 2D1N is within your grasp at just \$117 nett. For the perfect evening with your loved one, indulge in a pampering candle-lit Western dinner within your private balcony for an additional \$50. Seal your perfect evening with wine complimentary of OCC, and wake up to breakfast at the poolside café.

Call 6750 2100 or email us at **roomsales@orchidclub.com** to book an exquisite 2D/1N dream today!

- \$20 weekend surcharge applies. Terms and conditions apply.

The Cocoa Trees

"The Cocoa Trees" is a chocolate-lovers' dream-come-true. Whether it is the famous brands of M&M's, Toblerone, Cote d'or, Swiss Delice, Belgian, Hawaiian Host, Droste, Daim, Ritter Sport, or premium chocolates such as Feodora and Neuhaus for the more discerning chocolate connoisseur, you can be assured The Cocoa Trees offer the widest range of delectable chocolates under its various retail outlets and concessionaires!

From now to 30th Sept 2005,

- Get 10% discount on regular priced items with a minimum purchase of \$10 in a single receipt
- Members spending \$50 and above (after 10% discount) will be entitled to a free gift (worth \$10, selected by The Cocoa Trees)
- Terms and conditions apply.

Check out <http://www.ntuc.org.sg/members/benefits.asp> for more information.

Budget 2005: It's About Creating Opportunity,



Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lee Hsien Loong unveiled the Budget for Financial Year (FY) 2005 based on the theme "Creating Opportunity, Building Community". This Budget, PM Lee said, will benefit all Singaporeans. It will provide \$1.3 billion of help to groups which need and deserve help, especially those who are finding it hard to keep up with the structural changes. This Budget will also save taxpayers more than \$150 million in FY2006 and \$310 million in FY2007.

PM Lee, in his speech, pointed out:

"The Best Way to make Singapore a Land of Opportunity is to grow our economy, to generate the resources to realise our aspirations," PM Lee said. "That requires us to continually adapt to the changing world, upgrading and restructuring ourselves in order to stay competitive. Only then can we create good jobs, realise our dreams, and provide a better future for our children."

The Best Solution is to Press On with restructuring, but to give extra help to those who are struggling to keep up, for example older and less educated workers, or workers who cannot find jobs after being retrenched.

Building Community

We should help to tide them and their families over difficult times, and more importantly, equip them with the skills they need to find new jobs.

“As we forge ahead, nobody should be left behind. Everyone should have the opportunity to contribute, and should make the effort to do so; and everyone’s contribution will be valued. This will be a land of opportunity for all,” he pointed out.

The initiatives in this Budget, said PM Lee, will therefore address three areas:

- i. A Dynamic and Entrepreneurial Economy;
- ii. A Lean and Effective Government; and
- iii. A Caring and Inclusive Society.

Key Budget Initiatives FOR INDIVIDUALS

Personal income tax reductions [\$150 million in YA2006 and \$310 million in YA2007]

Top personal income tax rate lowered from 22% to 21% with effect from YA2006, and further reduced to 20% in YA2007. Marginal tax rates of all other brackets also reduced.

Edusave top-ups [\$50 million]

Edusave top-ups of \$100 for all primary and secondary school students.

Medisave top-ups [\$320 million]

Medisave top-ups ranging from \$50 to \$350, depending on age.

Medifund top-up [\$100 million]

CPF top-ups for older Singaporeans [\$80 million]

\$100 top-up to the CPF Special or Retirement Accounts of Singaporeans aged 50 and above.

Baby Bonus Scheme enhancements

Co-saving contributions up to the co-savings limit allowed any time within the six year period.

Expansion of range of uses of co-savings to include health insurance, and early intervention programmes for children with special needs.





Foreign maid levy reduction [\$90 million]

Foreign maid levy reduced by \$50 per month.

Lifelong Learning Fund top-up [\$500 million]

ComCare Fund top-up [\$254 million]

Encouraging savings for retirement [\$8 million]

CPF voluntary contribution cap increased and aligned to the mandatory contribution cap.

Tax relief cap for the self-employed to contribute to CPF increased to the tax relief cap for CPF contributions by employees.

Criteria for CPF members to top up the Retirement Accounts of their parents and non-working spouses liberalised.

Common contribution cap for the Supplementary Retirement Scheme (SRS), set at 17 months of the CPF salary ceiling.

Help households meet utilities cost [\$62 million]

Utilities-Save scheme for HDB households, with more for smaller house-types.

Discourage smoking

Increase in excise duty on cigarettes from \$293 to \$352 per 1,000 sticks with immediate effect.

Reduce illegal horse-betting activities

Horse betting duty changed from 12% of gross stakes to 25% of gross profits.

Give relief from stamp duties

Remission of stamp duties paid on aborted transactions.



Encourage Philanthropy and Community Involvement [\$23 million]

Recognise the advancement of sport as a charitable purpose.

Double tax deduction granted for donations with naming opportunities.

Computer Donation Scheme extended to include computer hardware and software donated to Institutions of a Public Character (IPCs).

PM Lee said: I ask everyone to join me in building a nation which offers opportunity and hope to all, and a society where every citizen belongs. Together we will build a Singapore that all of us will be proud to call home.

Holiday Well Spent



Over a period of four days and three nights, 216 SOS members and their families went along on a Kuala Lumpur/Malacca tour as part of SOS Family Outing 2004.

Members welcomed the short getaway which started on 16 December 2004. With children in tow, everyone dined, shopped and played to their hearts' content at Berjaya Times Square, Kuala Lumpur. Touted as the 'world's largest building ever built in a single phase' with 7.5 million square feet of built up floor area, it's no surprise that the entourage could not browse through the more than 1000 retail outlets or savour all the 65 food outlets. Berjaya Times Square is also home to the largest indoor theme park in Malaysia, the Cosmo's World. Covering 380,000 square feet of floor space, this stand-alone theme park thrilled the daredevils with abundant variety of entertainment and the most unforgettable hair-raising adrenaline-pumping rides.

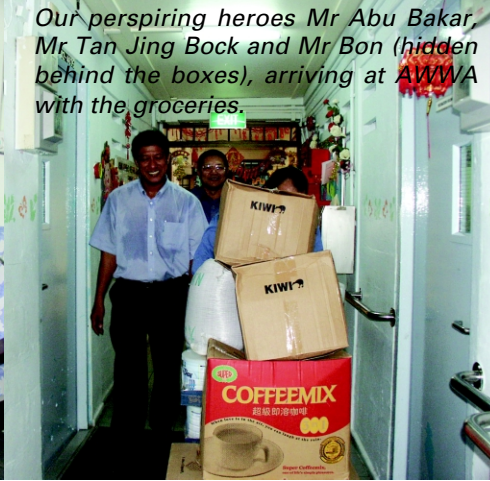
The holiday-makers ended their tour in the historical and charming city of Malacca before heading home on 19 December. It may have been a short holiday, but it was certainly one that was well spent in every 'cents' of the word!

Showing a little

The melodious singing of the elderly filling the air...refreshing indeed!



Our perspiring heroes Mr Abu Bakar, Mr Tan Jing Bock and Mr Bon (hidden behind the boxes), arriving at AWWA with the groceries.



From left, SOS Standing Mr Ramjeet Dadhibal and Mr Secretary Mr Mohamad Abu Mr Tan Jing Bock presenting elderly at AWWA.



"Zhen Kai Xin!" said Mr Ong Bin Liang when asked how he felt about staying at the Asia Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) Community Home for the Senior Citizens. Indeed the 64-year-old is "very happy" for the care and concern he has received from the staff there since the day he stepped in four years ago.

Mr Ong suffered from a stroke, and has since experienced slight difficulties in walking, requiring the assistance of a walking cane. Despite this, he is active and loves to mingle with his friends or goes downstairs for some exercise. When he feels like it, he may even go upstairs for some Karaoke session. Such is the day at the Community Home, where one does not feel lonely or even bored.

Most of the elderly are assigned to a twin-sharing unit, where they each have a room mate. The elderly

can even do simple cooking in a mini-kitchen in their rooms. There are plenty of activities organised for them, such as choir sessions, or even outings. Many volunteers come in frequently to help out and spend time with them.

"The elderly here are independent and we

accord them with freedom, so long as they abide by the rules and the curfew hours. So far so good, most

of them understand the rules." smiled Ms Yang Geok Foong, the Director of AWWA.

SOS adopted AWWA Community Home for the Senior Citizens more than 10 years ago. Till date, SOS makes an average trip of twice a year to the Community Home to send gifts and provision items to the elderly. This year, by request of AWWA, SOS has kindly donated some 140 sets of new bed sheets to the Home.

"We wash their bed sheets once a week, and till now, some have become rather worn and torn. By requesting for new bed sheets, we feel this is practical. Moreover, the number of elderly with us are increasing, and we want to have more sets of bed sheets to meet the demand if need be." Reasoned Ms Yang.

Apart from the usual provisions and groceries like Milo powder, coffee powder, to cleaning detergents, SOS has tried to contribute as much as they can.

Said SOS President, Mr Tan Jing Bock, who was there to deliver the rations, "Sometimes AWWA is in need of certain special items, and we try to accede to their requests. Till date, we have sent them items such as pillows and bolsters too. SOS always sets aside a budget to give assistance to our adopted Homes. Thus, we tell them to let us know whatever they need, and we shall try to accommodate their requests if possible."

Together with Mr Tan, Vice-President Mr Bon Sheun Ping, Assistant Secretary Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar and Standing Committee Members, Mr David Lim and Mr Ramjeet Dadhibal were all sweaty from carrying the numerous loads of provisions up under the scorching sun. However, their smiles never once left their faces.

Thank you for the bed sheets!



kindness

Committee Members David Lim, Assistant Bakar and President the bed sheets to the



Laying bed sheets? Gladly!



The elderly residents enjoying a session of dance-cum-karaoke singing by volunteers, some even from Taiwan and Hong Kong!



It is the Union's honour that we are able to do something for these elderly. This is just a little part that we can do, so we should give of our best. We want to set the example that if we are able to, we should contribute, whether it is in cash or in kind. Personally, I'm just glad to have this opportunity to visit and interact with them. We should think about how these old folks need our help! Mr Bon was quick to add.

Ms Yang always laments about the large number of volunteers that they always need. Much as the old folks are able to do simple chores by themselves, it never fails to make them happy when there are people who dropped by, spend time with them or simply to visit them.

However, she has this to say to SOS, "I really appreciate the kind effort and time that SOS puts in to help the Home. The amount of food and items that they bring is so overwhelming that saying 'thank you' is too simple. Year after year, come rain or shine, they will be here with the items. These may not mean much to many others, but to us, not having to purchase these ourselves really reduce our expenses. I really thank them from the bottom of my heart."



Shall we dance?

Do You Know?

The Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) Community Home was founded in 1976 to provide sheltered housing for the single elderly. It started on the first level of a HDB block with 24 one-room flat units. The Home has since expanded to more than 120 units to accommodate needy elderly - the singles, couples, and those with families. It accommodates a maximum of 140 residents.

In addition to the community home, there are two other centres operated under the care of the AWWA Elderly Services and these are the Seniors Activity Centre (SAC) and the Rehabilitation & Day Care (Ready Care) Centre. All three are located at Block 123, Ang Mo Kio Avenue 6.

AWWA provides social activities and various programmes for the elderly, who live in the block and the surrounding neighbourhood, and through the Ready Care Programme, AWWA aims to provide rehabilitative care to restore and improve the physical status of elderly who have been afflicted by stroke or other debilitating ailments of old age. It also provides day care supervision, social support and mental stimulation activities.



Cheers!

Where there is food, Karaoke, Lucky Draw and most importantly, the people, you have one of the biggest bash of the year! We are talking about the Members' Night cum SOS/Seacare Members and Staff Year End Gathering. Held on 30 December 2004 at Seacare Club@52, the bash saw a turn-out of 230 members and staff who were treated to a succulent buffet dinner. While many crooned the night away during the Karaoke sing-along session, some waited eagerly for a chance to win the Lucky Draw.

Eating, singing and winning may have been the order of the Members' Night, but SOS/Seacare Members and Staff could not have found a better way to celebrate this year end bash by welcoming a brand new year of better prospects among old friends. Cheers to a smooth-sailing New Year!



Welcome On Board

Seacare welcomes on board two new accounts assistants, Ms Elena Hng and Ms Tang Yit Mei, who joined in September 2004.

Previously from an auditing firm, Elena was constantly up to her neck in work, that she hardly had time for herself, much less for her newborn daughter.

"I was always so busy that I knocked off late into the night, and upon reaching home, all I wanted to do was to go to bed. It really took a toll on me as well as my daughter. It's so much better now. I get to do what I like, and I get to spend time with my family." Elena was obviously glad that she made the switch.

Most importantly, she is pleased that she learns new things everyday, and as she gains momentum at her job, she is confident that she will be able to tap on her experience and do a better job. In fact, as her responsibilities increase, she is looking forward towards contributing her part in Seacare.



With such encouraging colleagues and wonderful work environment, it's hard not to feel at home in Seacare, Elena exclaimed.



Feeling at home in Seacare is also how Yit Mei feels. Although she was initially bowled over by the big building and the numerous people working at Seacare, she soon found that everyone was helpful and willing to teach her the ropes.

"Previously working in a multi-national company has broadened my perspectives and experience. However, I know that the learning process is never-ending, hence I decided to have a change of environment to enable myself to learn new things."

Previously from the manufacturing industry, Yit Mei was game for any new challenges. It did not worry her that she was joining a completely new realm which she did not have any experience in. What is more important for her is to have a stable job now that her boys have grown up.

I don't really have to worry about them. I'm glad the job here allows me to spend sufficient quality time with

my family. I'm really pleased with the conducive environment here; definitely a big bonus point!

Members' Corner

Oh Boy!

Congratulations

going out to Mr & Mrs Shahrin on the birth of their baby son on 12 December 2004!



Coming Events

Housewives Gathering Session

23 April 2005



Seacare Focus



SMMC New Premises - Chic, Cosy, Comfortable



A brand new start to a brand new year! The official opening of the new premises of Seacare Maritime Medical Centre on 27 January 2005 opened with a big bang amidst much cheer and celebration.

The new medical centre sees a larger floor space of more than 2,000 square feet. The need to shift to a bigger clinic surfaced because of the need to accommodate the increase in number of patients and in turn, improve efficiency.

The design of the new clinic is chic, cosy and comfortable and not too clinical nor business-like at all. "In line with our professional service, we want to ensure that the medical centre reflects a clean-cut design and exudes a sense of calm and comfort for all who visit us. We take pride in that our patients will not feel like they are entering yet another office," Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO of SMMC, stressed.

Its new facility is a one-stop centre that integrates X-ray, laboratory, minor surgical and pharmacy services. Featuring a reception area and an administrative room, the new SMMC also highlights a 'Treatment Room' where minor procedures can be performed, a 'Bio-Physics Room' for carrying out simple tests such as blood tests and measuring height and weight, a lounge area for patients to rest in while waiting for their consultations, and two consultation rooms where patients can see Dr Chia and Dr Peh Keng Chuen.

"What is important is that we want to minimise waiting time for our patients. It is important to calm the nerves of our ill patients and we understand that it is necessary to provide a comfortable and soothing ambience for them to wait in," said Dr Chia.

The niche market that SMMC has embarked on, which is providing healthcare services to the maritime industry, entails being on 24-hour port-of-call standby for ships, whether they have docked or are simply passing. In addition to attending





With its improved facilities and capabilities, the SMMC will be able to provide even better healthcare to both local and foreign seamen and cater to the medical needs of the shipping and maritime communities. Its growth will add to the stature of Singapore as an International Maritime Centre.

Mr Heng Chee How, Minister of State for Trade and Industry

The SMMC fitted in very well with Seacare's twin objectives of serving the needs of seamen while maintaining its commercial viability. We foresee the market for maritime medical service will increase in step with Singapore's growth as an international maritime hub... The SMMC is one of the few that provide medical service tailored to the needs of seamen.

Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman, Seacare Co-operative Ltd

We do want to give of our very best to all who believe in us. In fact, we will strive to bring our service to higher levels. We want to convey our appreciation to them, that after their support so many years on, we want to and we can offer them better service after we have shifted to a new centre.

Dr Chia Yih Woei, Chief Executive Officer, Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd

to the seamen at their ships, the doctors may even perform evacuation for them at times.

Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman of Seacare Co-operative Ltd, noted: "Ship owners and managers have long appreciated the value of proper medical attention and care for the seamen manning their ships. Seamen who become too ill or sick to complete their service while on board ships between ports will mean costly interruption of shipping schedules and other inconveniences."

Today, SMMC has a strong foothold in the maritime medical sector.

Complimented the Guest-of-Honour, Mr Heng Chee How, Minister of State for Trade and Industry, at the official opening: "With its improved facilities and capabilities, the SMMC will be able to provide even better healthcare to both local and foreign seamen and cater to the medical needs of the shipping and maritime communities. Its growth will add to the stature of Singapore as an International Maritime Centre."

The new beginning at the Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) reflects the drive to provide well-rounded and better services for their patients, taking into careful consideration the needs of today's seafaring personnel. This includes the engagement of a new doctor to its stable.

Meet thirty-five year old Dr Peh Keng Chuen, who was previously a General Practitioner in the public sector. "This whole set-up between Seacare and SMMC is refreshing yet practical. And I feel heartened to know that we are always doing our best to reach out to not just the seafaring community, but also to the public-at-large."

Having joined in November 2004, the mild-mannered Dr Peh professed that coming over to SMMC has been an eye-opener.

This is certainly different from the usual practice of doctors doing consultations in a clinic. We also make 'house' calls...except that the 'house' is really a ship. Dr Peh smiled proudly. Instead of just having patients come to us, we go to them. So far, I've been on merchant and commercial ships. I think the service that SMMC provides is not only practical, but necessary too.



Dr Peh related an incident of how a ship was passing by for only a few hours and on board the ship were two sick seafarers. Because of the short span of time that the ship was stopping over, they couldn't very well leave their station. Dr Peh answered to the call. "A seaman was ill and the Captain was suffering from nerve-compression in the neck."

Dr Peh takes his job seriously and with pride. He even attended a course and attained a Diploma in Occupational Health, recognised by the Ministry of Manpower. "We tend to misunderstand that only certain people need retraining or upgrading. This is certainly not true. Doctors like us also need upgrading to stay on top of things. Having the right and wide range of skills make a lot of difference."

Revealing that engineering was his second love, Dr Peh, the father of two, gave this parting shot before breaking into laughter: "I guess I can be considered to be doing engineering still, though this is the engineering of the body."

For the past three years, some 84,000 individuals became union members because of a team of dedicated and committed recruiters who are well-trained and sufficiently motivated by Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd.

One member of the team is Ms Kanagamani who has been winning the top recruiter award ever since Seacare started on its journey to provide the service of membership recruitment. In the year 2004, Ms Kanagamani single handedly roped in 2,838 new members.

"I don't have any special formula," the winner maintained. **"I think I just have a knack of connecting with people I meet."**


For her accomplishments, she was presented with a Crystal Trophy and a stylish Rado watch at the 3rd Annual Award Presentation of the Seacare/NTUC Union Membership Recruitment, an event organised by Seacare Manpower to acknowledge the contribution of the recruiters. The event was held on 24 January 2005 at Seacare Multipurpose Hall.

"I also believe in having good product knowledge. So, I am looking forward to receiving extra tips and training from NTUC and Seacare. I want to upgrade for the members," the champ said. She was responding to the good news revealed by NTUC Assistant General Secretary Mr Seng Han Thong who was the event's special guest.



In his off-the-cuff speech, Mr Seng pointed out that the NTUC Organising Department will be working closely with Seacare Manpower to produce a sales kit and training programmes for the recruiters so that they can 'train more, earn more'.

"The environment is changing. We are targeting more and more younger executives due to the wider scope of presentation. We want to equip the recruiters with better soft skills and product knowledge so that they can achieve better targets. We are already upgrading the recruitment booths," Mr Seng said.

 **Join the Union
Enjoy the Benefits**

Seacare Recruits 84,000 NTUC Members Over 3 Years

Samudra caught up with the champ, Ms Kanagamani at her 'workplace' - outside NTUC FairPrice outlet at Pasir Ris.



Photos Courtesy of NTUC News Pte Ltd.

To the recruiters, Mr Seng said: "We need your help and support."

Commending Ms Kanagami and the rest of the team, he expressed: "I thank all the recruiters for a job well done!"

For the first time, the Top Three Recruiters Award winners included a gentleman. As the first runner-up top recruiter, Mr Chandrasegaran received a Crystal Trophy and a Tissot watch. Interestingly, Mr Chandrasegaran became a member in 2001 when approached by a Seacare Manpower recruiter. Not only did he sign up as a member, he became instrumental in bringing in 2,425 members in 2004. For him, knowing the needs of the potential members is vital.

"I spend time assessing the needs of the prospective member, finding out what makes him or her tick and what benefit would be most attractive," he said.

Ms Anne Wee, the 2nd runner-up top recruiter, also subscribed to having good product knowledge. The former AUPE Exco leader's knowledge and experience in trade unionism brought in 1,949 new members and she was rewarded with a Crystal Trophy and a Tissot watch.

At the award presentation, Seacare Manpower also acknowledged the contribution of another group - those who have been faithfully recruiting for two years. They are:

Ms Kathiza
Mr Mark Lim
Ms Doreen Tan
Ms Anne Wee
Ms Kanagamani
Mr V M Selvarajah
Ms Janice Wee
Mr Norhadi Salim
Ms Sapurah
Ms Hazlina
Mr Chandrasegaran



The pat-on-the-back event ended with a buffet dinner held at Club@52 and a lucky draw where 30 recruiters walked away with prizes ranging from VCD hi-fi system with karaoke function and microphone, CD micro systems, microwave ovens and more.



Eplace, The Place To Be



For just \$18, everyone came, saw and made merry with a free drink and novelties, and was treated to delectable buffet snacks during the Christmas Eve and New Year Eve celebrations, followed by a lucky draw with 20 magnificent prizes of household items such as cordless phones, cookers and even a DVD player for the top prize.

Be it a bright jingling Christmas, a countdown to New Year or a romantic candlelight dinner for two, Club@52 is the place to be for any celebration! Over a period of three months, Eplace held three special occasions, namely Christmas, New Year and Valentine's Day.



items made sure couples could bring home more than just a memory and filled stomachs.

If you missed those exciting events, don't despair. Seize the moment. Why wait for the next celebrations? Coming right up, watch out for the exciting March offer! Buy two bottles of 12-year Chivas/Hennessy in one receipt, and enjoy a bottle of Pint absolutely free! *

* Whilst stocks last

Saying "I Love You" to each other was made romantic for more than 20 couples under the moonlit sky at Valentine's Day. A three-course dinner complete with soup for the starter, marinated chicken as the main meal, fruit platter dessert and an exquisite cocktail called the 'Lovers' Dream', was indeed every lovers' dining experience.

All the lovebirds spontaneously participated in games, and certainly added much cheer to the night. To add a twist of fun, yet befitting the occasion, a duet-only Karaoke competition was

held in which the best songbirds were rewarded with wine as well as CD players sponsored by Carlsberg. The final lucky draw prizes of camera and household



Congratulations on the Grand Opening of New Premises

SEACARE MARITIME MEDICAL CENTRE

Officiated by our Guest-of-Honour
Mr Heng Chee How
Minister of State, Ministry of Trade & Industry
on 27 January 2005.



Mr Heng Chee How
Minister of State
Ministry of Trade & Industry

I congratulate Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) on the opening of its new premises.

In 1997, Seacare Co-operative Ltd set up SMMC to provide medical services to the seafaring and shipping community.

Its new premises hosts a one-stop medical facility, complete with X-ray, laboratory, minor surgery and pharmacy services. SMMC will thus provide even better healthcare services to its customers. This will enhance Singapore's position as an international maritime centre.

I wish SMMC every success.



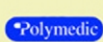
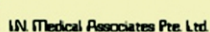
Mr Leow Ching Chuan
Chairman
Seacare Co-operative Ltd

Our primary objective has always been to serve and benefit seamen and their dependents and also the shipping community in reciprocation of their long and faithful association with us. The present relocation to bigger premises is our proactive response to the growing continued support of the seafaring and shipping communities for the SMMC's medical service.



Dr Chia Yih Woei
Chief Executive Officer
Seacare Maritime Medical
Centre Pte Ltd

We in the SMMC aim to serve and satisfy our patrons from the seafaring and shipping communities with our distinctive style of professional, friendly and dedicated medical service. Consonant with our providing a facilitated one-stop medical service centre for the convenience of our patrons, the shift to bigger premises is paramount for the continued quality service we provide.



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SMMC/ Micah Medical Clinic 3rd Floor Marc Building 1971 Taft Ave. Malate, Manila

Malaysia SMMC/ Klinik Sentosa No. 37, Jalan Dato Hamzah, 41000 Klang, Selangor Darul Ehsan



We Serve
with CARE