

Issue No. 4 (December 2008)

samudra

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



SMTS: The First Cohort of Ratings Graduates

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SOS UNVEILS SEACARE MARITIME TRAINING SCHEME

SOS has developed and unveiled a practical way to add even more value to its Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) companies - by educating, training and upgrading ratings so that they can work productively, efficiently and safely onboard CBA vessels.

And from the shipping companies and ratings' favourable feedback to the pilot programme, the Seacare Quality Rating Training (SQRT), SOS is confident that its new scheme, the Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS), is benefiting the maritime industry.

SMTS is established in support of the aim to man SOS CBA vessels with quality seafarers and to cater to the training, re-training and pre-sea training needs of ratings.

"We started off asking ourselves how could we bring more value to our CBA companies? What could we do more to do good for the ratings and the maritime industry?" said Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary. "The answer is SMTS."

The first action that came out of the Scheme was the five-week Seacare Quality Rating Training at the Wuhan University of Technology-Skaugen Training & Consulting Co Ltd (WSTC).

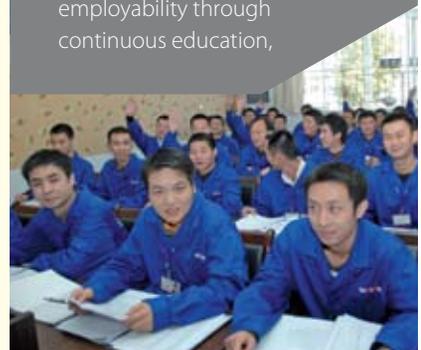
The WSTC is the first training institute authorised to provide maritime resource management training in mainland China. The Centre developed a brand of Maritime English training programme, known as the Seamaster, to improve Chinese seafarers' communication skills through proven methods such as interactive lessons with English speaking lecturers, assessment training and more.

SOS and Seacare, with the assistance of Singhai Marine Services (S) Pte Ltd, chose to work with WSTC to enhance the daily communication skills that all crew should possess i.e. professional related English for personnel of Deck, Engine, Gallery and Steward.

For five weeks, 40 ratings immersed themselves in an English speaking language environment without having to leave their homeland and learned about good social behaviour, marine pollution prevention, on board inspection, engine room operation and more – all in English.

SOS devised a four-pronged approach which entails:

- Identifying, developing and implementing educational programmes for SOS members and other seamen with the view to their serving and continuing to serve on vessels covered by SOS CBA;
- Continuously identifying, monitoring and evaluating new maritime training & education methodologies & systems;
- Collaborating with maritime authorities, employers, institutions and other interested parties in promoting seafaring as a rewarding career; and
- Enhancing SOS members' employability through continuous education,



RATINGS - LEARNING, GROWING

The Best of the Pack: These six ratings received the best awards



Wang Yi, 27

"Before this course, I did not have the courage to speak English. After five weeks, I am able to speak English confidently. I will not have any problems communicating with foreign seafarers. SOS and Seacare have given me a very good opportunity to improve."

Lu Yuxiang, 33

"My English has not only improved but my knowledge on safety issues has increased as well."

Yan Hai Ou, 24

"In seafaring, it is very important to communicate in one common language. I thank SOS, Seacare, PCL and this centre for equipping me to communicate more effectively."

Si Zhong Quan, 26

"My English has improved by a lot after attending this course. I am now more confident in speaking English onboard with seafarers from other countries. This increases my value to my company, NSSPL, and I think I can be even more productive at work."

G, UPGRADING



The Singapore delegation's visit to WSTC.



Wang Hui, 25 -----

Yang Qing Yi, 21, PCL -----

"I learned how to dispose garbage safely and I know the different terms used onboard. I have made many friends in this school."

"I am here because I want to be the best that I can be as a seafarer."



Learning in a well-equipped training centre.



Cadets having a group discussion in the dormitory provided by SOS and Seacare.



A conducive learning environment for cadets at WSTC.

SEACARE QUALITY RATING TRAINING GRADUATION CEREMONY AND YEAR END RECEPTION



RATINGS GRA

It was a significant moment; a momentous evening not only for the 40 ratings who were graduating, but also for all who have contributed in raising the bar in ratings training.

For SOS, it was an event that marked the beginning of an extensive reach to train more ratings for its CBA companies via Seacare Maritime Training Scheme;

For the Singapore shipping companies, the occasion signified the opening of a new avenue for them to employ quality ratings in the future and a closer partnership with SOS;

For the SOS PRC members and PRC shipping representatives, the evening provided an opportunity to celebrate commandery;

For Singhai Marine Services Pte Ltd and WSTC, the event co-organisers, the ceremony signified their professionalism as service providers.

The Seacare Quality Rating Training Graduation Ceremony and Year End Reception, which took place on 2 December 2008 in Marco Polo Hotel, Wuhan, was a special event indeed.

DUATE; WE CELEBRATE



Face-to-Face in Wuhan

When PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd, a subsidiary of PCL, found out about the Seacare Quality Rating Training, the company immediately participated by sending 15 of their newer Chinese ratings for the course.

"We employ many ratings from China so this was a good opportunity for us to upgrade their skills. Ratings from each country have their strengths and weaknesses. For ratings in China, the weakness would be their command of the English language due to the lack of exposure. It is expensive to send our ratings to Singapore to be trained. It is more effective and cost efficient to have the training on their home ground.

SOS has taken a bold step to understand the needs of the shipping companies. With training, we will have better crew, better proficiency, better safety records and smoother operations."



Capt Anthony Khoo, Senior Manager, Crew Department, PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd

"Shipping is a global industry. In order to communicate well, ratings need to be able to speak English especially English that is relevant to shipping. Thus, we are all for SOS initiative to spearhead this quality rating training."

Mr Henry Lim, Crew Manning Executive, GBLT Shipmanagement Pte Ltd

"A Singapore Union sponsoring a training course and helping us to find jobs in the international market? Many ratings found the offer too good to be true."

"It is time to change the old mindset that suggests Chinese ratings can't speak English. Chinese ratings can be as good as any other. Their skills are good, their wages competitive and they can speak in English."

Mr Terence Zhao Wei, Managing Director, Singhai Marine Services (S) Pte Ltd



"I was quite impressed with a few of them and have identified six to seven potential candidates. The kind of training that SOS provides is useful and helps the shipping companies in employing better quality seafarers. Overall I am satisfied and quite impressed with the ratings. I'm not just looking at their ability to speak English though that is important. I am also looking for good, positive attitude."

Capt Stanley Siaw, Manager, Marine Training Dept, APL Co. Pte Ltd



"We are extremely satisfied with the outcome. WSTC was established with the aim of assisting Chinese seafarers in improving their competence and meeting the requirements of the international crewing market. That is our specialty. Thus, we are very confident of delivering quality training."

Ms Sarah Tan, General Manager, WSTC



"Many of the participants spoke no English when they first started. I am glad that now many have the confidence to converse, even among themselves, in English."

Mr Matt Casteel, English Teacher, WSTC

STRATEGIES FOR SOUTH EAST ASIA WEEK OF ACTION



Much careful deliberation and strategising took place at the Seacare Building when some 20 unionists from the South East Asia region converged together to plan for the SEA Flag of Convenience (FOC) / Port of Convenience (POC) Week of Action that took place in November 2008.

The meeting, which was held from 17 to 18 October 2008, had representatives from Australia, Burma, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia and Japan.

Chairing the meeting was Mr Shigeru Wada from the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) while Mr Trevor Charles was the ITF Tokyo-FOC Campaign Coordinator.

The meeting focused on two main themes – "No Place To Hide" and "Burmese Human Rights Issue".

The detailed discussion laid the foundation for a successful Week of Action.

ONE-STOP RESOURCE FOR SEAFARERS WORLDWIDE

The ITF launched a new site which is described as the only 'one stop shop' for seafarers anywhere, irrespective of how computer literate they are or how good or bad the equipment they access it from may be.

Click on to www.itfseafarers.org and seafarers can easily access to latest news, advice and support service. The new site offers them information on their health, their pay and safety and includes features such as: Crew Talk message boards; advice and help; Ship Look-up Tool showing vessel agreements and other information; Inside the Issues briefing area; interactive polls; trade union contact details, and an ITF inspectors' blog.

The web resource is in English, the international seafarers' language. Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions will follow.

SECOND SEA REGIONAL WELFARE COMMITTEE MEETING IN TAIWAN

The Second South East Asia Regional Welfare Committee (SEA RWC) Meeting of the International Committee on Seafarers' Welfare (ICSW) was held in Taiwan from 21 to 24 October. The first meeting was held in Seacare Building, Singapore, in June 2008.

Mr Roy Paul, Assistant Administrative Officer of ITF Seafarers Trust, highlighted that the achievements of the ICSW Regional Seafarers' Welfare Development programme "at this early stage is a great testimony of the regional and international solidarity".

Regional Chairman Mr Dewa Nyoman Budiasa described the meeting as "an important collaboration between international and national municipalities, local governments, port authorities, maritime labour unions, agencies, ship owners, seafarers and other bodies who are interested in promoting welfare of seafarers and their families".

After the opening ceremony the delegates enjoyed a high speed train journey to Kaohsiung for the rest of the meeting. The RWC considered the work plan for the programme and made plans for the future. They also had the opportunity to visit the Port of Kaohsiung and the AOS Centre and the PCT Seamen's/Fishermen's Center. They were also invited to dinner by the Yang Ming Shipping, Kaohsiung City Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"There are people who care and have committed their life to serve and help seafarers. Today, globally there are more than 600 seafarers' centres receiving approximately 4 million visits a year, which effectively means that every seafarer visits a seafarers' centre at least 4 times a year... We continue to find new ways of delivering this much needed welfare to the seafarers on board their ships as well as ashore."

- Mr Roy Paul, Assistant Administrative Officer of ITF-ST

"The meeting in Taiwan was another successful meeting of minds and hearts with the goal of improving the seafarers' welfare. I hope that all RWC members will set up an efficient and effective port welfare committee in their respective locations."

- Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim, Vice President of the SOS and Regional Coordinator for the ICSW Regional Seafarers' Welfare Development Programme



SOS PARTICIPATED IN ITF FOC WEEK OF ACTION



The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Flag of Convenience (FOC) Week of Action in South East Asia, brought SOS IR Manager Mr Daniel Tan and SOS IR Executive Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar together with officers from SMOU onboard 11 vessels docked in Singapore ports. Six of the vessels were flying Panama Flag while the remaining vessels were Bahamas Flag, Marshall Island Flag, Cyprus Flag and Liberian Flag.

The campaign, which took place from 10 to 14 November 2008, was coordinated by the ITF as part of an ongoing global campaign against the FOC system. The key purpose was to ensure maximum coverage of FOC vessels by ITF agreements, which protect the rights of seafarers and ensure that the ships they sail on are safe.

"While onboard, we highlighted to the seafarers that they could contact us anytime should the need arises," said Mr Daniel Tan. Printed materials on ITF and where to get help were distributed to the seafarers.

On the success of ITF FOC Week of Action, ITF Maritime Coordinator Stephen Cotton said: "This week closed the way it began, with excellent coordination between seafarers, dockers and ITF inspectors nationally and internationally, and with unions working together in order to assist their members and counterparts across the region." In the region, ITF-approved agreements were signed by the operators of eight vessels after action by ITF-affiliated unions.



REVISED UKMTO TRANSIT CORRIDOR REPLACES MSPA

In the press release dated 29 January 2009, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) announced that as of 1 February 2009, the revised UK Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO) Transit Corridor would replace the Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA). This was due to the increase in the number and repositioning of warships in the region, and was designed to reduce the risks of collisions. The revision of the IBF High Risk Area in the Gulf of Aden has been agreed between JNG and ITF.

The revised UKMTO stated that during the period of transit of the area designated as the IBF High Risk Area, each seafarer shall receive a bonus equal to 100 per cent of the basic wage, that

the compensation is payable in the case of death and disability shall double. In the case of vessels that will transit the IBF High Risk Area outside of the east bound and west bound transit lanes created under the UKMTO Transit Corridor, seafarers have the right not to proceed with the passage. In such an event, the seafarer concerned shall be repatriated at the company's cost with benefits accrued until date of return to the port of engagement.

Mr Stephen Cotton, ITF Maritime Coordinator, highlighted: "As far as non-IBF agreements are concerned, I am taking this opportunity to advise that the same designations in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia should apply for ITF TCC and Standard agreements."

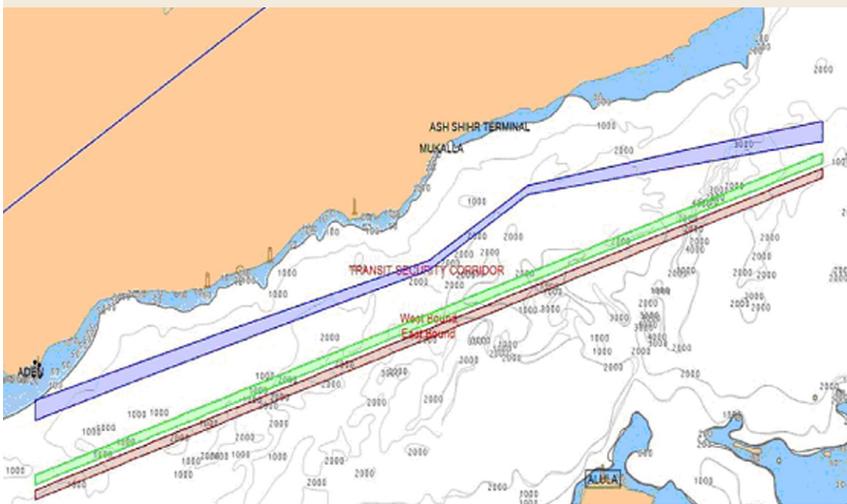
The revised UKMTO Transit Corridor involves the creation of separate, 5nm wide, east bound and west bound transit lanes, separated by a 2nm buffer zone. The coordinates of these two lanes are as follows:

East bound lane: It will begin at 045 degrees East between 11 48 North and 11 53 North, be oriented along a straight line course of 072 degrees and terminate at 053 degrees East between 14 18 North and 14 23 North.

West bound lane: It will begin at 053 degrees East between 14 25 North and 14 30 North, be oriented along a course of 252 and terminate at 045 degrees East between 11 55 North and 12 00 North.

Accordingly, the Eastern and Western boundaries of the IBF High Risk Area will be adjusted to meet the mouth of the revised UKMTO Transit Corridor on each side, as follows:

"The western border of the High Risk Area, therefore runs from the coastline at the border of Djibouti and Somalia to position 11 48 N, 45 E; from 12 00 N, 45 E to Mayyun Island in the Bab El Mandeb Straits. The Eastern Border runs from Rhiy di-Irisal on Suqutra Island to position 14 18 N, 53 E; from 14 30 N, 53 E to the coastline at the border between Yemen and Oman."



Zone indicated in pale violet:

Original Maritime Security Patrol Area (MSPA), which should no longer be used by vessels entering the Gulf of Aden after 0001Z on 1 February 2009. Vessels in transit of the original MSPA before 0001Z 1 February 2009 should continue to use this lane until their transit has been completed.

Zone indicated in light green:

West bound transit lane under the revised UKMTO Transit Corridor.

Zone indicated in brown:

East bound transit lane under the revised UKMTO Transit Corridor.

SOS SUPPORTS SPUR



From 1 December 2008, the Government will put aside \$600 million to the Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) – a training scheme geared towards helping Singaporean workers and unionised companies to better employees' skills through training and courses. This is made possible as a result of collaboration among the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) in consultation with tripartite partners – National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and the Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF).

Leveraging on the CET Centres, SPUR was initiated with three main objectives; to cut costs and save jobs, re-skill and up-skill, and build capabilities for recovery. The objectives are directed towards:

- helping local workers upgrade skills that will allow them to remain adaptable and create more options for them to take up other jobs,
- helping organisations deal with manpower issues and reduce unemployment or under-employment,
- as well as strengthening the skills labour market and remain vigilant towards economic changes and be prepared for an upturn.

SOS is in support of the national response towards aiding both workers and employers to make channelling of manpower supply a more productive and a win-win situation for all, especially in the current economic situation. This is because, through the strong tripartite relations that are practised here in Singapore, a mutual agreement where all parties benefit from a move or initiative is definitely possible.

SPUR is For All

Both workers and employers benefit in gaining newer skills at a highly subsidised cost. Employees will be given an individualised pathway from training to job placement based on three types of courses depending on the skills he or she requires.

For Employees... SPUR@e2i

Employees and members of unionised companies can tap on courses like the Certificate Service Professionals (CSP) Programmes, upgrading courses and Longer Professional Conversion Programmes (PCP) which are each catered to individual needs and industry demands.

The CSP Programmes reach out to workers from the manufacturing sector who like to be trained in the area of basic service mindset and skills so that they can enter the service industry upon the completion of these courses.

Upgrading courses are available for workers who want to acquire the industry skills to move up to higher levels jobs whereas the PCPs are catered to help retrenched professionals, managers, executives and technicians (PMETs) to receive professional skills that will allow them to take up PMET-level jobs again.

Career Centres at the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and NTUC's own Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) are always ready to guide workers who are in search of jobs and training facilitation.

For Employers ... SPUR@SNEF

Local companies are not being left out either. A new set of improved measures have been drawn out by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) to help local enterprises thrive in these difficult times. A total of \$2.3 million have been put aside for loans and funding, to help enterprises tide through the rough ride and if required, gain access to credits. This is to ensure that businesses have enough resources to remain competitive and survive during this period of economic instability. Included in the SPUR is a new loan scheme for working capital, extension of business financing schemes for bigger companies, additional help for small-to-medium enterprises and aid for firms that are venturing overseas.

In its true tripartite sense, SPUR aims to bring out the best outcomes for both employers and employees. At the end of the day, with financial support from the government, workers gain newer and better skills that are portable, while businesses benefit from the improved capabilities within the organisation as well as across the industry. Through SPUR, many unionised companies, workers and businesses can continue to thrive and overcome the tough times together.

SOS members, who are keen to know more about the programme, can do so through the following:

Website: www.wda.gov.sg
Tel: 6883 5885



YOUTH SEMINAR BRINGS FRESH BREATH OF PERSPECTIVES



Two representatives from the SOS Industrial Relations Department were part of the 63-strong Youth representatives, at the Young NTUC (YNTUC) Work Plan Seminar held from 6 to 9 November 2008 in Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

SOS Industrial Relations Executive Officers Ms Julia San and Ms Ong Kai Jing participated in the seminar which delved into the 2009 work plan that touched on the different programmes that will be laid out in the New Year, such as National Day, Labour Day, YNTUC volunteerism, more youth chapters and even the upcoming Youth Olympic Games in 2010.

Team YNTUC Adviser who is also NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Mrs Josephine Teo was present, along with YNTUC Chairman Mr Benjamin Tang and NTUC Vice-Chairmen, Mr Muhammad Asri Bin Arshad and Mr Henry Tay.

The Work Plan Seminar gave plenty of opportunities for the participants to discuss issues focusing on the youth aspects of union activities and looked into ways to identify and strengthen the sense of belonging among the youths in the respective unions.

Both Ms San and Ms Ong also had the chance to mingle with other youth activists and go on a mini city tour before proceeding back to Singapore. The four-day seminar has not only brought the youth representatives from the different unions together, but also helped to open their minds to look into ways to improve and work on the upcoming union programmes for the members. The youths are indeed leading the way for the new generation to play a vital role in the Labour Movement.



WOMEN EMPOWER, ENHANCE, ENGAGE

Women members can look forward to more action in the year 2009. At the NTUC Women's Development Secretariat workshop held from 1 to 5 November 2008 in Hanoi, Vietnam, the women unionists came together to brainstorm on ways to empower, enhance and engage more women.

Elaborating on the 3 Es was Mdm Halimah Jacob, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General. Other highlights included discussion over the work plan and team building session.

Among the many new and exciting activities proposed was one on the formation of an interest group. "We hope that through the interest group we can gather more women union members at the workplace to be involved in women's activities and discussions because they know they will be meeting up with 'like-minded' people," said Ms Mariana Amad, who together with Ms Nur Adila, represented SOS in the workshop.



NTUC CARE & SHARE AND BACK TO SCHOOL VOUCHERS

SOS reaches out to its members and their families who are in need of help. These are members whose total gross household monthly income are of \$1800 or below or have per capita income not exceeding \$500. In view of the current economic situation, many unions, inclusive of SOS are heavily involved in aiding families to cope with the rising cost of living.

One of the ways is through the distribution of the Care & Share vouchers, worth \$40 per member. In support of NTUC's outreach towards helping these families reduce some of their daily expenses, SOS has helped to select and distribute the vouchers to the eligible members. Through the vouchers, the recipients can either use them to top up on their EZ Link cards for their travelling needs, or to pay for their Singapore Powers utilities bills.

Day to day cost of living such as travel and utilities costs will cast a bigger impact on the lives of the lower income families. In addition, families with school-going children also have to factor in the cost of basic educational needs such as the purchase of textbooks, stationery and uniform, among many other school-related needs. That is why the Union has also taken the initiative to help distribute the Back to School vouchers given by the NTUC, worth \$125 per school-going child so that members can purchase these items for their children.

HARI RAYA – A CELEBRATION FOR ALL



SOS members, young and old, were all dressed to the nines as they came all prepared to celebrate Hari Raya Puasa.

While green may be the favourite colour to many, like the Vice-President of SOS Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim who was looking his best that day in a shiny, green baju kurung, many others turned up in myriads of colours, showcasing the latest fashion in their traditional costumes.

Grand Plaza Park Hotel was the chosen venue for the celebration held on 10 October 2008. Some 350 members and their dependants were present, eager to see what was in store for them. NTUC Assistant Secretary-General and Member of Parliament for Yio Chu Kang, Mr Seng Han Thong, graced the occasion as Guest-of-Honour. Also present were two groups of specially invited guests – the residents of Saint Theresa's Home and Boys' Town Home Singapore who were presented with green packets during the celebration.



An annual feature, the Hari Raya Celebration this year saw a line-up of entertainers from the Malay community. Famous veteran singers such as Mahani Mohd and Jatt Ali performed for the earlier generation while youngsters were blown away by Maiya Rahman. Twenty lucky draw prizes consisting of NTUC FairPrice vouchers were issued out, with the first prize being a 14-inch television.



As the celebration drew to a close, members were seen strolling out of the hotel making friendly chats with acquaintances, catching up with old friends, with the night's festive mood and joy still intact.



IT WAS ALL FUN, FOOD AND LAUGHTER AT THE SOS DEEPAVALI CELEBRATION



It was a colourful scene at the Emerald Ballroom of Parkroyal Hotel on 14 November 2008 as 160 members and their spouses walked in to celebrate the Festival of Light, in their very best attire.

The overwhelming response was a welcoming one for the members of the SOS Welfare Committee who were the key organisers for the celebration. Even before the highlights of the Deepavali dinner began, a pre-event entertainment line-up had been planned for the members. Activities such as henna tattoo attracted the ladies and men alike while the makeshift teh tarik stalls invited many tea lovers to try out the drinks.

Audience interaction was at its all-time high, not because of the aftermath of the caffeine from the tea, but due to a familiar face that was present on stage that night. Mr G T Mani, who engaged the audience through his eloquent ways and crazy antics, is a well-known figure himself, especially in the local Indian community, having been in the entertainment industry for 12 years. A traditional Indian dance by the dancers of Vasantham Central was brought to the audience as the first performance.

And as it is with all festivities, a selection of festive food was served to the members. SOS members and their partners indulged in the sumptuous Indian buffet spread as they soaked in the festive mood.

Pushing the entertainment to its climax that night was Diva Noris-Licious. Consisting of three "Divas", the trio, who are in fact three plus-sized men dressed up as ladies, delivered a stand-up comedy, causing many to roar with laughter.

As the Deepavali celebration wrapped up that night, happy, shiny faces were seen leaving the venue, bringing home with them a memorable experience of a night filled with fun, food and laughter.





A BEAUTIFUL SUNDAY MORNING AT THE ZOO

What better way to celebrate Children's Day than to spend it at the Singapore Zoo, among good friends and loved ones?



The children were filled with excitement while parents looked on with smiles on their faces. Sixty-three SOS members and their dependants were out and about at the Zoo on 5 October 2008, to spend the Sunday morning with their children.

The Zoo was an ideal location for the occasion, as its open concept provides learning opportunities for the children to experience the wildlife and nature within the rainforest environment.



Door gifts, in the form of cute, mini plush toys resembling giraffe, zebra, lion and rhinoceros as well as a notebook with photos of endangered species were given out to the children, who were delighted to receive them. To make it more exciting, the children had the opportunity to win prizes through the 30 lucky dips. The first prize consisted of \$40 worth of goodies which includes UNO H₂O cards, Kakuro game set and \$25 worth of NTUC FairPrice vouchers.



Seacare Focus



SEACARE MARINEPLUS AND SERVICES TO JOIN FORCES

“We are not here to compete, but to complement the other existing service providers who are already in the market right now. Together, we can improve on the efficiency of service delivery.”

Mr Alec Chew, Chief Administration Officer, MMSPL

One year ago, General Manager of Seacare MarinePlus Pte Ltd Mr Wang Chia Lim told Samudra that the team’s aim is to become the One Stop Service Provider in the maritime industry.

The company made a leap forward to fulfilling this dream. Come 1 January 2009, one division of Seacare MarinePlus – the Land Transfer Division, will usher in the New Year under a new name; Magnum Marine Services Pte Ltd (MMSPL), as a joint venture with Magnum Marine Services. The move will offer both Seacare MarinePlus and Magnum Marine Services a stronger presence in the maritime industry, with a wider range of services readily available for all ship owners and managers.

Something Different, Something New

MMSPL has something that they call their own, something that differentiates them from other companies which offer similar services – their combined years of experience in the line.

MMSPL’s new Chief Executive Officer, Mr R Chandra Segaran said: “We are definitely not going to do any less. With this merger, we will be stronger, provide better services as both our forte are now combined.”

Mr Chandra is no newbie to the industry. Having set up his own company since 1986, he is the best person to manage and helm the team at the new MMSPL. The down-to-earth seasoned leader however, gave his credits to the long working relationship he has with the Land Transfer Division Manager, Mr Terence Chng.

“Terence and I have known each other for a long time. I must say that with his experience in the operations of land transfer, we can tap on each other’s expertise to further boost our business without compromising on our employees.”

Seacare MarinePlus has a 51% stake in MMSPL, with Mr Chandra holding 39% of its shares. MMSPL will provide services in the areas of boarding ships for crew husbandry, land transport for crew transfer, land transport for corporate requirements, sourcing and supply of goods for crew and ship owners or managers. The new team hopes that MMSPL will successfully move towards their shared objective, which is to provide the enhancement of a one-stop service centre for the shipping community.

Joining the team is Mr Alec Chew, also a shareholder, who will oversee the general administration matters as the Chief Administration Officer. Mr Chew and Mr Terence Chng, who were from Seacare MarinePlus will continue to play their key roles in the new company.

“We will continue to provide support services to the ship owners, and the maritime players alike. We are not here to compete, but to complement the other existing service providers who are already in the market right now. Together, we can improve on the efficiency of service delivery,” said Mr Chew.



MAGNUM MARINE

Mr Salim Haja Mohideen who is MMSPL's Boarding Supervisor, agrees that productivity will increase with the formation of the joint venture. MMSPL operates from the NOL building at Alexandra Road, an ideal location that is near the seaport and a few minutes away from the airport. This results in higher efficiency and prompt delivery of its crew transfer services as they can minimise on time spent travelling to the ports, with the new arrangement.

"We are a service-oriented company. Delivery of quality services is a priority to us, we understand the needs of the ship managers and we know that time is an important factor, that is why we have delegated the tasks to ensure that we get to the pick-up points at a cost-effective and timely manner," said Mr Wang, who will also double up as MMSPL's General Manager.

And service is what they are focused on. The individuals forming the MMSPL team have managed many difficult situations in their line of work, going out of their way to meet their clients' needs. During the SARS outbreak, Mr Chandra and his team

took to the high risks involved by being on board the quarantined vessels to settle on a clearance issue and ensure proper handling of documentation was done. Other team members have also amply demonstrated their willingness to solve situations involving crew members, who were held back due to port requirements, without delaying the vessel's sailing schedule.

On top of their diverse experiences in these areas, challenges like these are possible to overcome due to their wide network and contacts as well as a deep understanding of port formalities and needs of the maritime industry. Most importantly, the team itself is committed to provide personalised, reliable and value-added services catered to the requirements and demands from their clients. While it is still the beginning of the journey for the team, MMSPL is certain and poised for newer and bigger challenges that come their way.

"We are definitely not going to do any less. With this merger, we will be stronger, provide better services as both our forte are now combined."

Mr R Chandra Segaran, Chief Executive Officer, MMSPL



CHAN TEE SENG ELECTED AS BOARD MEMBER OF ICA



SOS and Seacare would like to congratulate Mr Chan Tee Seng, Chairman of Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd as well as the Chairman of Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) Executive Council, for his election to the International Co-operative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP) Regional Board.

Mr Chan succeeded Mr Seah Kian Peng who was then the Chairman of SNCF Exco and ICA-AP Board Member.

The announcement was made during the ICA-AP 8th Regional Assembly and 5th Co-operative Forum held in Hanoi, Vietnam. The Regional Assembly and Co-operative Forum took place from 1 to 6 December 2008 and was attended by representatives from international organisations who were present to delve into the topic of discussion: Co-operative Advantage in the Global Economic Crisis. A total of 17 participants from five Singapore co-operatives attended the week-long event. Representing Seacare

Co-operative Ltd were Director Mr Mohamad Bin Abu Bakar and Group Senior Manager Ms Jacquelyn Lam.



Both the Regional Assembly and Forum explored ways in which improvements can be done to contribute towards the development of the co-operative scene, through maximising the co-operative advantage.

The next Regional Assembly is slated to be held in Beijing, China in 2010.

SUNSHINE GARDEN CONDO SHINES BRIGHTLY IN SECOND PROJECT

Sunshine Garden Condominium has spread its rays to yet another venue – Sunshine Garden 2 Condominium, which is currently under construction.

Seacare Properties (Philippines) Pte Ltd holds a 15% stake in the project. The move leaves a positive impact on Seacare Properties as it continues to boost its businesses and venture into new areas to expand its wings. With key partners who are dedicated and supportive in the construction of the Sunshine Garden 2 Condominium, the major shareholders are looking forward to its completion.

Located in the Mandaluyong district, the estate is situated ideally for city dwellers and has been designed to meet the lifestyle needs of the lower to middle income earners. Sunshine Garden 2 also offers units consisting of one to two bedrooms.

Joining the "Sunshine Family", Sunshine Garden 2 aims to give one an affordable city lifestyle, topped with easily accessible amenities and facilities.





SEACARE EXPLORES OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

The quest to explore viable business opportunities and to enhance the well-being of seafarers has brought Seacare to Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The trip, which took place from 20 to 24 October 2008, was part of Seacare's initiatives to look into the possibility of appointing clinics to be affiliated with the Seacare Maritime Medical Centre.

One of the highlights of the four-day trip was the visit to Dubai Maritime City, the world's first purpose-built maritime centre. The 2.27 million square metre Dubai Maritime City offers a multi-purpose centre that houses a city campus, offices, residences, maritime centre and industrial precinct.

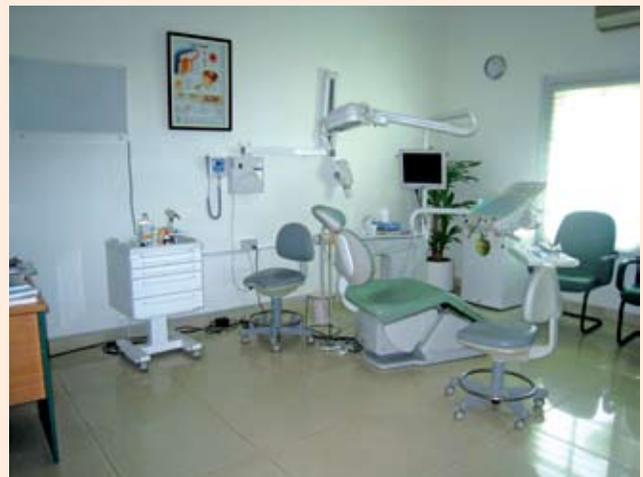




Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman, Seacare Co-operative, Dr Chia Yih Woei, Chief Executive Officer, SMMC, and Ms Jacquelyn Lam, Seacare Group Senior Manager, also dropped by the Fujairah Port Clinic. The Clinic provides an ideal location for seafarers calling at the Fujairah Port as the proximity of the location allows seafarers to visit the clinic without the need to pass through immigration. This clinic within the port provides quick response to emergencies that require medical attention and adds value by ensuring that seafarers remain fit and healthy to perform their duties on board.

Seacare is continuously on the lookout for opportunities to extend its services locally and beyond.

Seacare is presently exploring ways in which it can contribute and work together with its potential Dubai partners to create seamless services to benefit seafarers and the international maritime scene.



Seacare is continuously on the lookout for opportunities to extend its services locally and beyond. Since its inception, the co-operative has been providing various forms of services be it in medical, manpower or even landscape. And it continues to explore and expand its reach.



Seacare Landscape is at it again. Growing towards bigger expansion, with bigger projects under its belt.

SEACARE LANDSCAPE WINS 'THE ARTE' P



PE'S ARTISTIC CRAFT PROJECT

With the economic gloom casting its shadows globally, many industries, landscape notwithstanding, are affected by the downturn. However, Seacare Landscape is ready to brave the storm, come what may. General Manager Mr Firos Angullia, stresses that:

“Our immediate directive will be cost effectiveness and productivity.”

And of late, they have indeed received plenty of requests from their pool of clientele. The latest project that came knocking on their doors is their first landscape implementation project that requires the team to start from scratch, which takes up two blocks of a 36-storey condominium.

Good News in Bad Times

Despite the slowdown, the Seacare Landscape team is excited to start crafting and putting their experience and good knowledge on landscaping needs to use. This is a move from maintenance projects and allows the team to explore newer ways to construct and execute the project from its very beginning to the end.

The budget involved is equivalent to an L2 grading, if it was a public tender. The project, known as The Arte, Balestier, is located at 41-47 Jalan Raja Udang, and involves a total of 330 units, including one level of carpark, swimming pool and communal facilities. Seacare Landscape's role in this project is to customise and implement the look and feel of these areas, a majority of which involve softscape features.

A private tender that holds a budget of approximately \$600,000, the project includes customised landscape construction. This means that Seacare Landscape will bring in a new level of implementation, with the Landscape Architect putting in his expert touches in the planning, sculpting and directing the placement of various greenery and features according to the needs and preference of the client.

“In the current crisis in the global economy, there will no doubt be tougher times ahead. In view of the fall in demand, spending and insecurity of payment, we have to strengthen ourselves and ride through the storm ahead as one unit. Nonetheless, we will not slow down nor lag behind but we have been more aggressive than before to look for more works and planning to increase our sales for the coming new year,” said Mr Firos.

The concern highlighted by Seacare Landscape General Manager is with regards to the variable factors that can affect the landscaping and construction industry on the whole. This includes spillover factors such as the supply chain disruptions from the mega projects which are currently ongoing resulting in the depletion of resources from plants to machineries and even labour. While these issues may arise, the team is prepared to brave through the stormy weather together. It is through their dedication and passion for the landscape industry that has garnered a number of returning clients who place their trust on the team's commitment to deliver quality services.

Teamwork Keeps them Going

Working together as a team keeps them going. Clear communication channels and passion in the various elements involved in the projects undertaken by the team help in building a harmonious rapport not only among clients and the company, but also internally, among the various departments themselves.

Be it providing curbside appeal, drawing up plans to amplify the surrounding beauty with softscape features, planting shrubs to serve as groundcover or trees to help provide shade at certain spots of the estate, Seacare Landscape is ready to fulfil the landscaping needs, without putting any details into neglect. Healthy plants and environment still remains as an important part of the team's working culture.

The same principles will apply in The Arte project which is due to complete within the second to third quarter of 2009. The Seacare Landscape team has a promise to deliver – constant high quality services which include productivity and cost efficiency, to spread out its wings to reach out to more customers who require service delivery and a dedicated team that remains inspired to provide landscaping ideas tailored to the clients' needs.



DROP IN CENTRE SCO INTERNATIONAL SEAFARERS

"I find that the location of the Centre is very convenient as it is within the port area. This helps me save on cost and the high speed internet connection is useful for us."

– AB Ron S Fabro

Mention the Seacare Drop-In Centre to seafarers, and you're bound to get positive reviews along with personal stories from those who have tried and tested the facilities there.

Since it began its operation on 1 August 2007, the number of visitors at the Centre has grown tremendously. From then till November 2008, a total of 1,003 visitors from over 26 different countries, 25 shipping companies and 481 vessels have dropped in and utilised the services there.

Take AB Ron S Fabro for example, who had personally spent some productive time at the Drop-In Centre recently. "I find that the location of the Centre is very convenient as it is within the port area. This helps me save on cost and the high speed internet connection is useful for us," said AB Ron.

Friendly staff who assist the seafarers who drop by also contribute towards a nice and relaxing stay at the Centre. Help is indeed, just a call away. Ever ready to serve all visitors, the staff have been well-trained to lend a listening ear or a helping hand.

Leisure, Comfort and Location Contribute to Influx of Visitors

Ideally located at the Pasir Panjang Terminal Building, the 25 square metres Seacare Drop-In Centre operates from Mondays to Fridays, from 3pm to 10pm. Seafarers, regardless of their rank, race or nationality are all welcome to sit in, relax and get in touch with their families back home, through the web cameras, emails or even phone calls. International calling cards are ready for those who miss the voices of their loved ones.

These services do not stop short at that. Reading area has also been dedicated to those who prefer having their quiet time while waiting for their next departure call, with a selection of magazines, newsletters and informational guide on the city are also readily available for the visitors.

Deck Cadet Zandro C Galanga is a satisfied visitor who has maximised his wait for the next sail by dropping by the Centre. "The vessel we were sailing on had to stay in the port for almost one day. Therefore, during this time, I made it a point to visit the Centre. There, I managed to use the internet to chat with my family back home free of charge. Thank you SOS and Seacare!"

In total, more than 11 types of services are made available to the visitors of the Drop-In Centre.

RES HIGH WITH RERS

These include landline phone services, free local phone calls, international calls with the use of calling cards, private sound proof booths, chairs and writing tables, computers with a 22-inch LCD screen, internet services such as e-mails, web browsing, internet telephone calls and web cameras are also installed to ensure only the best for the seafarers.

Many visitors drop by to use the internet to get updated with the latest offerings, either from the current affairs or personal matters with 842 users recorded during the 14-month period in review. Seventy-eight visitors favour the web cameras, preferring to add visuals to their communication mode while 156 communicated via the telephone.



SOS and Seacare Welcome More to Drop In

The number of visitors and positive feedback are testament to the user satisfaction in the Centre's ability to bring communication opportunities to the seafarers at a much faster rate by having all the services under one roof, within the port area itself.

The influx of seafarers dropping in is also an encouraging sign for both SOS and Seacare who worked together with the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore to set up the Drop-In Centre. The Centre was initiated with the international seafarer's welfare at heart, with the hope that it helps to provide a safe haven for them to relax, unwind and communicate with their loved ones.

SOS and Seacare welcome more seafarers to the Seacare Drop-In Centre, while looking into ways and channels through which they can further improve the services and functions of the Centre, to continually provide only the best for the seafarers.

Seacare Drop-In Centre for International Seafarers

Pasir Panjang Terminal Building
33 Harbour Drive

#01-00

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday, 3pm-10pm

Tel: 65 6778 6518

Email: sdic@seacare.com.sg

CO-OPERATIVE LEADERS DISCUSS CHALLENGES AT THE ACLC IN BANGKOK

“We are well placed to play an important role in this new wave of interest in social enterprises as part of the nation’s social and economic transformation.”



Seacare Co-operative was highlighted by Mr Chan Tee Seng, Chairman of SNCF Executive Council as one of the non-NTUC co-operatives which have become significant players in their co-operative sector.

Co-operatives have indeed made a significant impact and reach on society, Mr Chan pointed out at the Annual Co-operative Leaders’ Conference (ACLC) held in Bangkok, on 1 November 2008. Representing Seacare were Mr Tan Jing Bock, Mr Mohamed Idris, Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar, Ms Shena Foo and Ms Jacquelyn Lam.



In his speech, Mr Chan pointed that in the last five to seven years, the co-operative movement has done well and that the co-operative sector can look forward to challenging and exciting times ahead. He outlined four key challenges:

- To meet the challenges in the credit sector.
- To build competencies to be more competitive in the market place.
- To innovate and to meet new social needs.
- To embrace the youth as a source of talent, and customers.

Co-operatives, said Mr Chan, are a natural form of social enterprise. “They effectively combine the discipline of economics and business with the values of caring for society.”

“We are well placed to play an important role in this new wave of interest in social enterprises as part of the nation’s social and economic transformation.”

Highlights of the Conference included Guest Speaker, Dr Preecha Sitdhikornkrai from the Co-operative League of Thailand, delivering a speech on the developments of the co-operative movement in Thailand. Other speakers were Ms Freda Tham, Executive Director of ISCOS who spoke on social entrepreneurship; Mr Poh Leong Sim, Co-operative Secretary and Legal Director of the NTUC FairPrice shared on FairPrice’s experience on Innovation while Mr Teo Say Hong, ICA Global Youth Representative and Chairman of SNCF Youth Committee presented on the subject of leadership rejuvenation.

MAXIMISING LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH AN INSPIRATIONAL WORKSHOP



Leaders from the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF) service sector co-operatives came together to attend the workshop on “Inspirational Leadership for Global Challenge”, which was organised by the SNCF Service Sector Committee. Catered especially for SNCF service sector co-operatives, the Workshop is part of its corporate development programme and was held at Batam from 18 to 19 October 2008.

A total of 40 leaders from various service sector co-operatives participated in the Workshop. Representing Seacare Co-operative Ltd were Mr Harun Bin Salleh, Mr Yusof Bin Abd Rahman, Mr Chung Keng Meng and Mr Michael Tham.

The two-day Workshop explored a range of topics which included expectation management; anticipating and being ready for change as well as focus management. Leaders also gathered tips on how to be prepared for change, especially in the working world, and to carefully plan to ensure future employability and realise the necessity to manage potential stress that arise from this change.

The participants also acquired newer skills in the area of interaction with the people they lead, in order to inspire and motivate them in what they do. In addition to that, the Workshop also covered ways in which leaders and co-operatives can work together to face the wave of change while focusing on lifelong learning as a long-term investment for individuals who are in the co-operative sector.

For our Seacare representatives, the Workshop has indeed provided them with an enriching experience and prepared them beforehand, on how to approach and manage situations that can arise in the co-operative context and we look forward to provide our continued support towards SNCF’s programmes to contribute towards improving the service sector co-operatives.

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