

Jun + Jul 2006

samudra

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

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contents



Features

- 3 SOS Welcomes New Advisor, Ms Grace Fu
- 4 ITF Offshore Task Force Meeting at Seacare
- 6 SOS/Seacare Golf 2006



Industrial Relations

- 8 A.P. Moller Renews CA
- 9 Ship Visit On Board APL Iolite



Welfare and Social Activities

- 13 International Sports Week
- 15 Durian Trip to West Malaysia
- 16 Family Get-Away to KL
- 18 SOS/Seacare Members' Night; Members' Corner & Coming Events



Training

- 10 Member Takes Up Certificate of Competency in Class 3 Deck Officer
- 12 Members' Training; featuring Computer Course

Membership

- 14 NTUC Branch Recognition Award; SOS Thanks Internal Auditor Mr Steven Chua and Welcomes New Auditor, Mr Tang Teng Lung



Seacare Focus

- 20 Seacare International Sets Up New JV – ETOP Services
- 22 Congratulations to Mr Goh Yeow Tin on his National Day Award
- 23 SMMC Makes Waves at Greece Tradefair
- 25 SMMC Appoints Affiliate Clinic, ACPD in Vietnam
- 26 Seacare Environmental Landscape Division Clinches More Contracts
- 28 Seacare Environmental Sends Restroom Specialists for Upgrading
- 29 Seacare Co-operative Institutional Member of Centre For Seniors
- 30 Xinnet Incorporates Learning with Fun
- 31 Seacare i-ConnecZ Ready for New Beginning with New Name

A WARM WELCOME TO SOS

NEW ADVISOR MS GRACE FU!



Ms Grace Fu, Minister of State for Ministry of National Development, has accepted SOS' invitation to serve as its advisor with effect from 1 August 2006.

Having officially joined Mr Lim Boon Heng's team in Jurong GRC as a new MP on Nomination Day, Ms Fu was one of the 24 new PAP candidates, and part of the PAP team that won the recent elections. She was sworn into office by the President on 30 May 2006.

Previously the Chief Executive Officer of PSA International Ltd

(PSA) for South East Asia and Japan, Ms Fu was responsible for the PSA businesses in Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and Japan. In that capacity, she manages the flagship business of PSA in Singapore, which has staff strength of 4,800. The seaport in Singapore is recognised by the industry as a leader in terms of volume and operational efficiency.

With effect from 1 August 2006, the four advisors of SOS are –

- 1) Mr Lim Boon Heng
- 2) Mr Zulkifli Mohammed
- 3) Mr Arthur Fong
- 4) Ms Grace Fu

SEACARE BUILDING – THE VENUE FOR FIRST ITF & ICEM OTFG CONFERENCE IN ASIA PACIFIC

The first conference of its kind in Asia Pacific Region was held in our very own Seacare Building.

From 13 June to 15 June 2006, some 37 delegates from 16 countries, including Australia, Brazil, Denmark, Indonesia, Trinidad and Tobago, Norway, Nigeria, UK and USA, were in Singapore for the ITF and ICEM (International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions) Offshore Task Force Group Meeting. The event, which was hosted by SMOU and SOS, took place at the multi-purpose hall, Seacare Building.



In his welcome address, Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary, applauded the ITF and ICEM for organising the conference which offered invaluable opportunity for offshore oil-rig and gas workers in the Asia Pacific Region to exchange views with and learn from the experiences of their counterparts in others regions in the world.

"Though no significant number of Singaporeans work offshore in oil-rig installations or gas production and supply, we cannot but be aware of the hustle and bustle of these off-shore activities going on in the other countries in this region or in the world. After all, we are a major centre of oil-rig manufacture and we are a gas importer," commented the SOS Chief.

Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister of the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Deputy Secretary-General, was the guest-of-honour. Mr Norrie McVicar, Chairman of the ITF Offshore Task Force Group, Mr Lars

Myhre, Chairman of ICEM Energy Section and ICEM-ITF SOSC (Strategy and Organising Standing Committee) and Mr Tony McGregor, Head, Strategy Unit, ITF-SSD, were among those present.

"Though no significant number of Singaporeans work offshore in oil-rig installations or gas production and supply, we cannot but be aware of the hustle and bustle of these off-shore activities going on in the other countries in this region or in the world. After all, we are a major centre of oil-rig manufacture and we are a gas importer," commented the SOS Chief.



SINGAPORE'S APPROACH TO SECURING DECENT WORK

Though securing decent work for all seems a long way off, it is not impossible to achieve, Mr Lim Swee Say, Minister of the Prime Minister's Office and NTUC Deputy Secretary-General pointed out at the ITF-OTFG Conference.

To secure decent work, we need to embrace globalization and not fight it. No one can change the environment to suit us and no one country, no matter how big, could have absolute advantage of globalisation.

"All of us need to find a competitive advantage. In Singapore, we restructure, nurture new service clusters, attract new investments and continue to build new human capacity," he said.

That is how Singapore tackled structural unemployment and employment rates - by embracing globalization and strengthening our competitive advantage. So instead of trying to change the world, we change with the world - by adjusting, adapting, competing, restructuring and

repositioning to help workers to capture more opportunities, to cope with pain of loss of jobs and help workers get new jobs.

Singapore also recognized that the journey of economic growth is a journey with no end and the job is never done. To secure decent work, three things have to be done fast and well, Mr Lim commented. We need quantum leap in productivity and skills to enhance jobs; increase employment rate for older workers; and re-employ retired workers.

He also pointed out that how far and fast any country can go in securing decent work will depend on how strong and effective their tripartite efforts are. Securing decent work is possible if the three social partners - trade unions, employers and the government are committed to work together. The trade unions in Singapore, he stressed, is committed to playing its part in fostering economic growth and securing more decent work for all.

"All of us need to find a competitive advantage. In Singapore, we restructure, nurture new service clusters, attract new investments and continue to build new human capacity," he said.

COMPLY WITH BASIC HUMAN AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS, URGES ITF OTFG CHAIRMAN

"I would like to thank the SMOU and SOS for their invitation and for their support for workers in the developing world who are subject to exploitation by those multinationals that allow their contractor to employ workers on terms they'd never dare try and get past their northern hemisphere colleagues. Part of the reason for this conference is to see how we can work together to stamp those kinds of practices out, and encourage all oil and gas companies to comply with basic human and trade union rights.

"The ITF and ICEM will use our very considerable influence to promote health and safety standards and guarantees of wages and work conditions. We aim to see that all workers in this worldwide industry are treated with equal respect."

- Mr Norrie McVicar, Chairman of the ITF Offshore Task Force Group



130 GOLFERS BATTLE FOR TWO HOLE-IN-ONE PRIZES



It was the perfect weather for that perfect tee that everyone was warming up towards. With two Hole-in-One prizes dangled by SOS and Seacare – a BMW 523i Series and BMW X3 Series sponsored by SOS/Seacare and Performance Motor Ltd respectively, it was hard not to be excited. And out came the golf clubs and off went the numerous buggies towards the various starting holes!

"We would be staging future golf game at different locations to let participants try their skills at different courses. It would also serve to make known the twin character of our two organisations to more people at different places,"
Mr Leow said

Held to commemorate SOS 35th Anniversary and Seacare 12th Anniversary, the golf tournament was one of the celebratory events that both organisations are holding this year, which saw some 130 participants battling it out on the course. Mr Arthur Fong, MP for West Coast GRC and SOS Advisor, was the special guest, while other distinguished guests include BG Tay Lim Heng, Chief Executive of Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), Capt Chong Chee Eng, Chairman of Singapore Maritime Employers' Federation (SMEF) and Mr Ong Yen Her, Director of Labour Relations Department, Ministry of Manpower. SOS/Seacare also hosted a dinner function at the Tanah Merah Country Club's Telok Paku Lounge to thank all guests, associates and friends.





During the dinner Mr Leow Ching Chuan, General Secretary of SOS, pointed out: "We have been jointly celebrating the anniversaries of our two

organisations because of our very close links, our shared membership and our mutual association with maritime activities."

He continued: "Celebratory events like this golf game and this dinner are our way of thanking people who have supported us in one way or other. In the process, we hope to enable our patrons and friends to know one another better and also understand the joint linkage of our two organisations."

The lush and soothing greenery of the Tampines Course at the Tanah Merah Country Club was "deceiving", for the challenging 18 holes under the sweltering heat was no piece of cake. It was a whole new level playing ground for all 130 participants because true to the promise made at the SOS/Seacare Golf 2005, the golfers had the opportunity of swinging off at a new location this year.



Previous golf games were held at the Orchid Country Club while last year's participants had to contend with the challenging 18-hole Serapong Course at the Sentosa Golf Club as well as battle sea breezes at the same time. And Mr Leow has indicated that they would like to arrange next year's game at yet another new course.

"We would be staging future golf games at different locations to let participants try their skills at different courses. It would also serve to make known the twin character of our two organisations to more people at different places," Mr Leow said to much applause.

Although there were no takers for the hole-in-one prizes, it was certainly a close call in the other categories. Mr Wu Zhong Ming swung his way to the championship of the 'A' Division while Mr Bernard Tan emerged victorious under 'B' Division. Here's a quick look at the winner's roll of the SOS/Seacare Golf 2006:



	Winner	Handicap	Points
'A' Division (Handicap 0 to 22)			
Champion	Wu Zhong Ming	21/17	41 ocb
First Runner-Up	Allen Chua	20/16	41
Second Runner-Up	W T Wong	17/14	37 ocb
'B' Division (Handicap 23 to 36)			
Champion	Bernard Tan	24/19	38
First Runner-Up	Cheng You Shuang	24/19	36
Second Runner-Up	Dr Toh Choon Lai	24/19	33
Nearest to Pin			
Hole 2	Jonathan Teoh	9/7	2.3m
Hole 11	Richard Trinh	21/17	1.5m
Hole 15	Ryuichi Maruyama	22/18	2m

It was time for everyone to chill out and let their hair down at the dinner after a competitive morning. SOS/Seacare had also set aside 80 lucky draw prizes for all, which certainly added to the joyous mood.

A.P. MOLLER SINGAPORE RENEWS CBA



SOS members working onboard A. P. Moller Singapore's vessels have every reason to be pleased – A. P. Moller has renewed its Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with SOS on 17 July 2006.

At the signing of the CBA, SOS was represented by General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan and Executive Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat, while A. P. Moller was represented by Managing Director Capt Gaurav Bansal and General Manager Capt Amit Pal.

Covering a total of 28 Singapore Flag Vessels with 250 ratings employed, three sets of CBAs were concluded effective from 1 March 2006 to 31 December 2008.

Beside wages adjustments, one of the highlights of the renewed CBA is the Company's pledge to continue with the contribution to the Seafarers Provident Fund (SPF), administered by Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd, for every seaman employed onboard under the terms of the Agreement the sum of S\$50 per seaman per month and the contribution to the Seacare Maritime Scheme (SMS) at US\$10 per seaman per month.

"SOS has not only enjoyed a healthy relationship with A. P. Moller, but a consistent strong level of trust has also been built upon over the years. We definitely look forward to more great years of firm working relations with A .P. Moller, and are indeed pleased to have concluded this CBA smoothly," said Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary.



Ship Visit

FOCUS



: APL IOLITE



SOS Industrial Relations Officer Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim paid a courtesy call on the crew members on board the NSSPL vessel, APL Iolite, a container vessel.

The visit which took place on 27 July 2006 at Brani Terminal Berth 4 certainly thrilled the Filipino crew members, six of whom were ratings. Mr Mohamed Idris Bin Mohamed Ibrahim asked after their well-being and was assured to know that they were happy and that conditions on board the vessel and good.

He had also brought along small tokens of souvenirs in the form of jockey caps and umbrellas for the members, who expressed their appreciation for the union's care and concern.

RATING SETS SIGHT ON BEING AN OFFICER -WITH SOS HELP

"It's been worth it!" said Mr Jainal Atan, who had put his career on hold while he pursued further studies at the Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA) more than a year ago. The SOS member had signed up for the Class 3 Deck Officer Certificate of Competency Course through SOS Training Grant.

This 18-week course has seen Mr Jainal transformed from an unsure person, to one who is now confident that he can handle the rougher seas, whether in his work or studies. Today, Mr Jainal has passed his written examinations and will be taking the compulsory oral examination.

"Studying full time means I am unable to contribute financially to the family. And on top of that, to incur hefty school fees would certainly have deterred me from going for further studies. But all these have become possible now, all thanks to the Training Grant given by SOS," he reiterated.

Mr Jainal pointed out that the grant was more than just financial help, because the road leading to this Class 3 Deck Officer COC Course has not been easy. He had to grit his teeth and undergo the various STCW95 Short Courses such as 'Medical First-Aid on Board Ship', 'Electronic Navigation Systems', 'Advanced Fire-Fighting' and more.

"Whenever things got tough, it felt like a lifeline of hope that I could hang on to, knowing that I have the support of not just my family and friends, but the 'backing' of SOS too."

No matter what failures or difficulties he may face, Mr Jainal has never thought about giving up. The oral examination poses a 'huge' hurdle that he would have to conquer. In this oral test, he will face the examiner from Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) who will test his knowledge with real situations at sea. And this test alone can span from an hour and half to three hours.

However, the hope for a better life for himself and his family has indeed motivated him to upgrade his skills despite his initial reservations. Mr Jainal reckons that he didn't just gain financially, but will benefit from better prospects and job opportunities.

He quipped, "Clearing Class 3 is the first, but big step. It opens the doors to more opportunities and better prospects. From there, I can go on to do Class 2 and 1, which will qualify me to be a Chief Officer or even the Master...and that is where I want to be!"

"Whenever things got tough, it felt like a lifeline of hope that I could hang on to, knowing that I have the support of not just my family and friends, but the 'backing' of SOS too."



Class 3 Deck Officer Certificate of Competency is an 18-week course which is designed for local and international deck personnel who aspire to become Junior Deck Officers. After the successful completion of this course, the candidates are exempted from the Certificate of Competency Class 3 written examination of the Maritime Port Authority of Singapore (MPA). They need to pass the oral examinations conducted by the MPA for the award of Class 3 Certificate of Competency. The course meets the requirements of STCW 95 and is highly recognised by the international shipping industry.

ASPIRING TO BE A JUNIOR DECK OFFICER?

Entry Requirements

Candidates must complete the appropriate sea-service and/or following a pre-sea training program

Course Modules

Practical Navigation
Coastal Navigation
General Ship Knowledge
Meteorology
Ship Operations
Applied Science
Mathematics

The Procedures

Eligibility Guidelines

Stage 1:

To qualify for the Deck Class 3 Certificate of Competency (COC) oral examination, a candidate shall have:

- Approved seagoing service of not less than:
 - (a) 36 months for direct entry candidates;
 - (b) 12 months for candidates who are pursuing the Diploma in Nautical Studies conducted by Singapore Polytechnic.
- Performed, during the required seagoing service, bridge watch-keeping duties under the supervision of the master or a qualified officer for not less than 6 of the final 12 months; and
- Completed Class 3 preparatory training program conducted by Singapore Maritime Academy (SMA).

Stage 2:

To qualify for the issue of a Class 3 COC, candidates are required to complete the following ancillary training program in accordance with the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers 1978, as amended in 1995 (STCW 95):

- Advanced Fire-Fighting
- Electronic Navigation Systems
- GMDSS – General Operator Certificate (GOC)
- Oil, Chemical and Liquefied Gas Tanker Familiarisation
- Proficiency in Medical First Aid
- Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats.

Other requirements include:

- Certificate of Attendance
- Medical Fitness

*Graduates must fulfil the mandatory sea-time and pass the Oral Examination conducted by MPA upon completion of this course before he/she is awarded the Class 3 Deck Officer Certificate of Competency.

For more information, please visit www.sma.sp.edu.sg



COMPUTER? NO PROBLEM!

At halfway round the globe on the other side of the world at a little-known but exotic place called the Grand Cayman Islands, where the sun shines warm and lying on sandy beaches enjoying a glass of Long Island Tea was the norm, Mr Jerry Nolan Brown, a Singaporean, was right there.

He was not there to enjoy the high-life, but to work for some 10 months there at the invitation of his sister-in-law, who lives there with her own family.

Now Mr Jerry is back in Singapore for a short break and the thought struck him to find a job and settle back right where his home is. He realised that he needed to be equipped further with more skills. And the rest is "history" – he made the right move by approaching SOS for the Training Grant and yes, going for upgrading first!

He remembers the earlier days when he had already taken advantage of SOS Training Grant Benefit and went through many other courses.

"The Union pays for my course fees and on top of that, I get a training allowance too, so we can't say that we don't have the opportunity. I'm very thankful to SOS for their assistance and opportunities that they have given us. The Union has done a lot for my family – the benefits, the study grants, and now this too!"

This time, an enthusiastic Mr Jerry has signed up for the CompTIA A+ Certification for PC Service Technician Course at NTUC LearningHub, where over a period of three days, he acquired new knowledge and hands-on experience of a broad range of hardware and software technologies. He professed that he is looking into going for the Networking Course after this.

"I have always been interested in computer and IT-related stuff, so doing this course seemed the natural choice. There are always times when we feel stagnant or ready to throw in the towel, but having an interest in what you set out to do, gives the fulfilment and satisfaction."

Mr Jerry beams with pride as he re-counted how his knowledge of IT has allowed him to communicate with his family in Singapore while he was away. Staying in touch was more than just through the phone. His knowledge of computers meant he could hook up via a webcam and really see his family over the internet, based thousands of miles away.

"I even instructed my son how to rectify a minor problem of the washing machine over the webcam, which would otherwise have required some hundreds of dollars to repair!"



CompTIA A+ Certification for PC Service Technician

Course Duration: 48 hours

Course Info: CompTIA A+ certification is an international industry credential that validates the knowledge of computer service technicians with the equivalent of 500 hours of hands-on experience. Major hardware and software vendors, distributors and resellers accept CompTIA A+ as the standard in foundation-level, vendor-neutral certification for service technicians. The exams cover a broad range of hardware and software technologies, but are not bound to any vendor-specific products. The skills and knowledge measured by the CompTIA A+ exams were derived from an industry-wide and worldwide job task analysis. To date, more than 500,000 individuals have obtained CompTIA A+ certification.

Pre-requisite: Advanced Operating Systems, PC Maintenance



RACING TO A GREAT START!

They huffed and they puffed; they tugged and they sprinted. But our sportsmen from SOS and Seacare didn't let up for a moment, even though the competition was stiff.

Concluded successfully on 24 June 2006, the International Sportsweek for Seafarers saw a total of 1,166 competitors of 10 nationalities vying for the top honour of netting the championship. The categories up for grabs include soccer, basketball, table tennis, telematch, tug-of-war and various track and field events.

Representatives from the various organisations and ships pit their skills and stamina against each other as they attempted to run the fastest or jump the highest. Several teams were evenly matched and evidently, the camaraderie between team mates in relay races and telematches



were so steadfast that the tough fights soon turned the heat up several notches higher.

SOS member Hazman Madon dashed to a winning start in the 60m Dash (Class III & IV) with a gleaming time of 8.41 seconds. The SOS team tugged its way to the first runners-up position in the Tug-of-War (Local Team), while another SOS line-up clinched the second runners-up position during the Telematch competition.

This year, SOS and Seacare also sponsored trophies for both the soccer and basketball categories, in which the teams of Ocean Power and Ocean Tankers emerged the champions respectively.

A big thank you to all our participants, who have done us proud with your sterling sportsmanship!

64 UNIONISTS RECEIVE BRANCH OFFICIALS RECOGNITION AWARD

SOS is proud to present the two branch officials who were awarded the NTUC Branch Officials Recognition Award.

They are Mr Michael Tham, SOS EXCO Alternate Member, and Mr Zakaria Zahir, who sits on the SOS Welfare & Community Services Committee as an Alternate Member.

In the Branch Officials Recognition Award Ceremony which was held on 26 July 2006 at the Amara Hotel, our two deserving comrades were part of the 64 union leaders who were commended specially by Guest-of-Honour, Mdm Halimah Yacob for their exemplary dedication.

The Branch Officials Recognition Award Scheme was launched in 2001 to recognise outstanding leaders, who will also be rewarded with the opportunity to participate in Exchange Programmes, workshops and seminars. Through such learning trips, our union leaders can certainly strengthen their understanding of regional economic and political developments.

Without a doubt, both unionists are happy and honoured to be bestowed with the award. This year, the recipients benefited from a learning trip to Bangkok, Thailand, which took place from 24 August to 27 August 2006.



SOS THANKS MR STEVEN CHUA

& WELCOME MR TANG

"I am honoured to be appointed as SOS Internal Auditor. I thank the Union for this opportunity. As long as SOS needs my help, and as long as I am able to contribute, I will do the best of my ability and do my part for SOS."

Mr Steven Chua Bian Hai has relinquished his position as Internal Auditor of SOS with effect from 23 May 2006. He has also served as SOS Office Bearer for more than 20 years.

SOS would like to convey its sincere appreciation to Mr Chua for his dedication and contributions; and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.



In place, SOS Standing Committee Member Mr Tang Teng Lung was appointed as the new Internal Auditor with effect from 1 June 2006.

Said 58-year-old Mr Tang, who is a SOS activist since August 1977, "I am honoured to be appointed as SOS Internal Auditor. I thank the Union for this opportunity. As long as SOS needs my help, and as long as I am able to contribute, I will do the best of my ability and do my part for SOS."



Paying Tribute

TO THE KING OF FRUITS



Going ga-ga over the fresh, thick aroma of the king of fruits permeating the atmosphere may seem outrageous to some, but to the 166 members and their family members, the regular durian trips to West Malaysia justify the long travelling distance!

Organised by the SOS Welfare Division, the entourage departed bright and early on the deluxe coach for the Desaru Fruit Farm on 15 July 2006. And for two solid hours, participants were welcomed to sample as many durians as they desired. They could hardly keep their hands off the supple yellow-fleshed fruit!

Other highlights along the way included a shopping trip at the Aeon Mall at Jalan Tebrau in Johor Bahru, which brought about delightful additions of shopping bags to the travellers. Dinner was arranged at a local restaurant, where everyone had their fill with local delicacies, before the smiling group began their journey back to Singapore.



FAMILIES ON DELIGHTFUL GET-AWAY!

With so much more to see and enjoy, it was little wonder the trip whizzed by in an exhilarating blur for all 180 participants. What a terrific trip it was!



A trip to the Genting Highlands and Kuala Lumpur during the month of June was a much-needed getaway for our SOS members and their family members.

The five-day four-night trip was organised to coincide with the June school holidays, which not only gave an avenue for families to spend quality time together, but at a cheap and definitely affordable rate too!

Spanning between 8 to 12 June, some 180 members and their families jumped at the opportunity of partaking in a fun-filled and memorable tour, with accommodation at a superior deluxe room in First World Hotel at Genting Highland and a superior room in Legend Hotel at Kuala Lumpur. With SOS subsidising part of the cost, it was all less than \$100 for members!

At 2,000 metres above sea level, the magnificent city of Genting Highlands offered a cool respite from the hustle and bustle of Singapore. The crisp invigorating mountain air, complemented by lush green tropical rainforest, was a huge draw for the members.

Interestingly, the participants also found the drastic contrast of Genting Highlands a welcome





attraction. The staggering potpourri of international standard facilities range from lures such as golf for the avid golfer, horse-riding, to the indoor and outdoor theme park for the thrill-seekers.

And travelling by coach to a mere 50km away is the heart of Malaysia – Kuala Lumpur. This city capital features ultra modern skyscrapers that stand shoulder-to-shoulder to rows of quaint old shop houses, where the members got to savour the haute cuisine at the simple hawker stalls located just beside.

The awesome sight of the Kuala Lumpur Tower was probably one of the first and



most enduring images the visitors encountered. The picturesque sections of the city transforming into a sea of kaleidoscope lights at night would certainly catch anyone's breath.

With so much more to see and enjoy, it was little wonder the trip whizzed by in an exhilarating blur for all 180 participants. What a terrific trip it was!

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JUST FOR OUR MEMBERS...

24 June was a good night of fun and laughter for some 125 SOS members, who had trooped down to Club@52 at Seacare Building for none other than SOS very own Members' Nite!

With delectable food on the table fit for a king, everyone feasted and enjoyed each other's company; catching up with one another while some others made new pals.

A big toast to all!



MEMBERS' CORNER



MY LITTLE ONE...

Congratulations

to Mr and Mrs Abdul Aziz
Mohamad on the birth of their
baby girl on 7 July 2006!



COMING EVENTS [Sept - Oct]

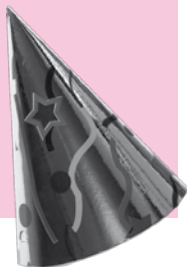
Study Grant
Presentation

2nd September



Children's Day
Outing

10th September



World Maritime
Day Celebration

18th September



Deepavali
Celebration

27th October



Seacare Focus



"We estimate that ETOP Malaysia will generate significant sales volumes in the first full year of operations and continue to double its annual volume each year over the first few years. ETOP Malaysia will serve as the template for similar ventures in the region, such as major emerging markets throughout Asia, where the substantially larger market potential of these products can be exploited."

Mr K K Ng,
President & CEO
of Asia Payment Systems Inc.

How does one keep ahead of the stiff competition experienced in this rat-race world of business? Be a cut above the rest by allowing technology to shape a new business into a thriving one of course.

Seacare International (M) Sdn Bhd entered a joint venture agreement on 28 June 2006 with InterPay International Airtime and Malaysian entrepreneur Mr Yap Kit Chuan to incorporate ETOP Services (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (ETOP Malaysia). Seacare International (M) holds 25% of the shares of ETOP, while InterPay International, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Asia Payment Systems Inc., has 60% and Mr Yap holds the remaining 15%.

ETOP Malaysia is a flagship operation with interests in the prepaid business segment. Prepaid products such as telecom services for cellular and long distance calls, gift cards, entertainment and transportation tickets, as well as cash cards are high in demand in Asia. This will translate into an attractive niche market for vendors who will then distribute and sell to customers via electronic systems. Thus, a network of ETOP Dealers will be established in the region. This nation-wide scope will include convenience stores, supermarkets, departmental stores, drug stores, news stands, fast food outlets and other retailers. ETOP Malaysia plans to distribute popular consumer brands such as CELCOM, MAXIS, DIGI, TMNET, NASIONCOM and more.

SEACARE INTERNATIONAL (M) GOES ELECTRONIC WITH ETOP



Said Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman of Seacare International (M), "We are very excited about this project, which not only brings us a step closer to a cashless and electronic era, but has the potential to revolutionise the way businesses are conducted."

In the initial stage, it is projected that some 2,000 retailers will be recruited by ETOP Malaysia as Authorised ETOP Dealers, who will be supplied with Electronic Data Capture terminals (EDC) that permit the downloading of prepaid "stock" on an online, real-time basis. All EDCs are linked to the ETOP Dealers Administration Systems ("EDAS")

located at the Company's premises, which manages the credits/debits of the Dealers' accounts through a card-based sub-system. This online system, managed through Asia Payments, links will also permit real-time management of dealer inventories and credit limits. EDAS also effectively prevents fraudulent transactions, administers Dealers' discounts and sales force's commissions.

Mr KK Ng, Asia Payment Systems Inc's President and CEO pointed out, "We estimate that ETOP Malaysia will generate significant sales volumes in the first full year of operations and continue to double its annual volume each year over the first few years. ETOP Malaysia will serve as the template for similar ventures in the region, such as major emerging markets throughout Asia, where the substantially larger market potential of these products can be exploited."

Asia Payment Services is a fully reporting US public company with its principal offices in Hong Kong and business activities keenly focused within the payment processing and loyalty rewards industry in China and throughout Asia. Its recent acquisition of InterPay also means that Asia Payments now owns assets and operates in multiple locations across Asia, and is looking towards the development of various synergistic businesses throughout the region.

The other shareholder, Mr Yap, a Malaysian entrepreneur, has existing interests in telecommunications in Malaysia and Indonesia.

STAYING ON TOP OF THINGS

Meet Stephanie Poon,
the new Project Manager of
Seacare International (M) Sdn Bhd.

"In my opinion, ETOP Malaysia is a development with big potential growth. Many of the skills I had acquired from previous work experiences have stood me in good stead, but with ETOP, I am constantly challenged to learn and acquire new knowledge," said Ms Poon.



A whole new project which she has to oversee, yet learn from scratch, Ms Stephanie Poon is certainly not one to be deterred or overwhelmed by big challenges.

Since 15 May 2006, the new Project Manager of Seacare International (M) Sdn Bhd has been in charge of the ETOP project in Malaysia. Based in Petaling Jaya, her role is an important one. From the handling to the execution of marketing and advertising plans, to being the right-hand man of the General Manager, she will have to liaise with agents, dealers and other outsource companies as well.

"In my opinion, ETOP Malaysia is a development with big potential growth. Many of the skills I had acquired from previous work experiences have stood me in good stead, but with ETOP, I am constantly challenged to learn and acquire new knowledge," said Ms Poon.

She had previously worked as a TV Seihan Planner with Sony, and had handled the Australian and New Zealand market.

She said: "Competition may be intense for ETOP, but I believe that there is a market for it. Easy, fast and convenient, these are the right ingredients to form the right equation in order for a successful business, because what matters most is the provision of good service to the public. And of course, I will do my part in this formula too."

SEACARE EDUCATION CEO GETS NATIONAL DAY AWARD

The Singapore National Day Awards are a means of recognising various forms of merit and service to Singapore. This year, a total of 2,936 individuals in 20 award categories received National Day Honours.

Mr Goh Yeow Tin, CEO of Seacare Education Pte Ltd, has been conferred the National Day Award – The Public Service Star (BBM). Together with other grassroots volunteers, the dedicated grassroots leader had committed time and energy to work towards achieving the goals and objectives of improving the quality of lives of the residents within the ward.

He had previously been awarded the Public Service Medal (PBM) in recognition of his community work in 1998.

Mr Goh speaks to Samudra on his receiving of the National Day Award.

Mr Goh On Getting the Award

"I was pleasantly surprised when the Prime Minister called me about a month ago to inform me that I have been awarded the Public Service Star by the President of the Republic of Singapore. I received his message with a mix of joy and honour, because I realised that I am really receiving this award on behalf of the many grassroots helpers and party activists who have spent endless hours helping in the ward to improve the welfare of the poor and needy as well as to make the ward a better place to live in."

On How He Started

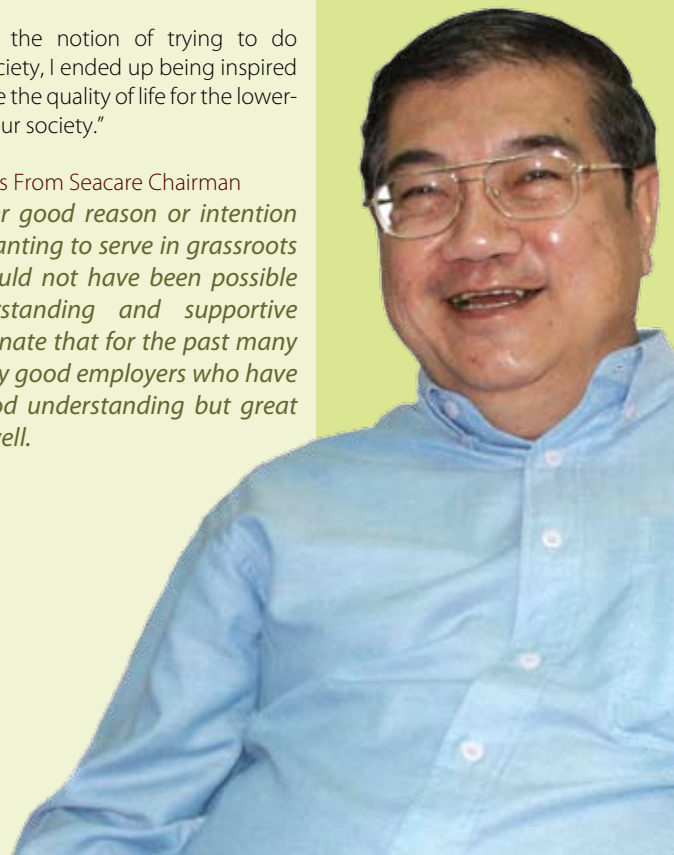
"Twenty two years ago, I took a small step towards a journey that still is ongoing today. I actually started by helping at the weekly 'Meet-the-People' session and was unprepared by what I saw; I came to understand poverty and hardship; I witnessed the plight of broken families; I sympathised with the disabled and the less fortunate. It suddenly dawned upon me that there were still many amongst us who needed help and assistance to improve their well being. I subsequently proceeded to help at the Citizens' Consultative Committee (CCC) and realised that it was possible to use the community network to further improve the environment for residents and to help create a more gracious society."

In short, armed with the notion of trying to do something to repay society, I ended up being inspired by a mission to enhance the quality of life for the lower-income and needy of our society."

On the Support He Gets From Seacare Chairman

"I think for whatever good reason or intention one may have for wanting to serve in grassroots organisations, it would not have been possible without an understanding and supportive employer. I am fortunate that for the past many years, I have had very good employers who have not only shown good understanding but great encouragement as well."

In this respect, I have to thank our Chairman, Mr Leow for his very strong support for my grassroots work as well as his patience and understanding when it comes to my grassroots commitment. He too has a heart for the poor and needy and is ever ready to support grassroots work. This has made my task much easier and rendered me more effective. For that, I am extremely grateful."





SMMC REACHES THE WORLD

The 20th edition of Posidonia, the world's biggest shipping trade exhibition, closed in Athens, Greece, on 9 June 2006, with the global maritime community reaffirming its commitment to develop networks, build competence and share information. Held once every two years, the Olympics-equivalent international shipping fair attracted the participation of visitors from 40 over countries.

This year, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), the Association of Singapore Marine Industries and 16 Singapore maritime companies participated in Posidonia 2006 as part of the Singapore Pavilion, led by Mrs Lim Hwee Hua, Minister of State for Finance and Transport. BG Tay Lim Heng, Chief Executive of MPA and Mr Teo Siong Seng, Chairman of SMF and other industry leading voices participated in the Tradefair too.

Mr Manolis K Kefalogiannis, Minister of Mercantile Marine of Greece, graced the opening of the Posidonia on 5 June and extended a warm welcome to all guests and participants.

At 216.6 sqm, the Singapore Pavilion this year is the largest that Singapore has had at Posidonia. Said Mrs Lim, "Posidonia provides an excellent platform for Singapore-based maritime companies to reach out to the global marketplace and for us to connect companies from across the globe to the tremendous opportunities that are opening up in Singapore and in Asia."

Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd (SMMC) was one of the organisations featured in the Singapore Pavilion. Represented by Capt

Say Eng Sin, Chairman; and Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO, SMMC took the opportunity to showcase its one-stop medical facilities as well as the provision of maritime healthcare to local and foreign seamen.

Dr Chia pointed out, "Singapore is a highly regarded maritime hub, with a vibrant and diverse maritime community. Likewise, SMMC is well-poised to be any organisation's maritime partner in offering quality and top-notch services. Going regional serves to promote the brand name of Seacare and SMMC as a preferred maritime healthcare provider, both within and beyond Singapore."

It has only been a short one year, but SMMC has already begun making waves in the region. Embarking on a series of appointment of affiliated clinics in neighbouring countries such as Malaysia, Philippines and Indonesia, many seafarers have benefited from the specialised maritime healthcare attention available. The latest to join the rank of SMMC's affiliated clinics is the Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics (ACPD) in Vietnam and discussions are underway for more tie-ups.

A larger premise, and coupled with the introduction of the Seacare Medical Scheme by SOS, both local and foreign union members gain tremendously from the range of medical services which included health screening to qualified SOS local members.

Dr Chia emphasised, "We will not let up in our efforts to better ourselves and improving our medical facilities; and what we can do for our patients and members. On a bigger picture, we remain committed to do our part in making Singapore a gateway to Asia for companies and organisations keen to establish its presence in Singapore."



SMMC MAKES ITS FIRST MOVE INTO VIETNAM

In yet another milestone, Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) has made its move and taken the first stride into Vietnam. In its latest tie-up, SMMC has appointed the Australian Clinic & Pathology Diagnostics (ACPD) as its affiliated clinic.

On 20 July 2006, SMMC formally appointed ACPD as its first affiliated clinic in Vietnam, to render medical services to seamen and other patients referred by SMMC. Present

at the agreement signing ceremony at Seacare Building were Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman & Group CEO of Seacare Co-operative, Dr Chia Yih Woei, CEO of SMMC and Ms Mariana Amad, Manager of SMS; while ACPD was represented by Mr Richard Trinh, Chairman of ACPD, Dr Minh Nguyen, Medical Scientist and CEO of ACPD, Dr Dang Thi Thuy Anh and Dr Nguyen Quang Anh.





*Said Mr Leow,
"We want to ensure that as many SOS members as possible will benefit from SMS. And to do this, we have identified a two-pronged approach of introducing more components under SMS while at the same time, looking into further commercial expansion of SMMC, such as the appointment of overseas clinics."*



Mr Richard commented,
"I have a very positive feeling about this partnership. Seacare Co-operative and SMMC are both well-established businesses with good reputations and capable leaders at their helms. I believe this is a win-win situation for all parties, and I am sure ACPD will be able to contribute and add value to this equation. I am certainly pleased and excited to have this opportunity to work together with Seacare and SMMC."

Dr Chia pointed out, "The appointment of ACPD as our affiliated clinic in Vietnam is good news for all, because members and our referrals can be assured of good medical attention at ACPD. We are currently also looking to launch the Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) in Vietnam through

ACPD, and this would mean that qualified Vietnamese SOS Members and their dependants will be able to reap the medical benefits of SMS. The benefits of SMS will be tailored accordingly to the needs of our Vietnamese members."

Being the first Union to offer free health screening to qualified local and foreign members, the SMS was received with open arms and since then, it has been full steam ahead.

First launched on 1 March 2005, the SMS entitles both local and foreign members to medical benefits; and since February 2006, all paid-up local members could also enjoy comprehensive optometric eye examination (CEE) for free.

Said Mr Leow, "We want to ensure that as many SOS members as possible will benefit from SMS. And to do this, we have identified a two-pronged approach of introducing more components under SMS while at the same time, looking into further commercial expansion of SMMC, such as the appointment of overseas clinics."

Besides relocating to a larger premise in Singapore in January 2005, SMMC has also, at present, established six affiliated clinics in various neighbouring countries such as Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia. There are further plans in the pipeline to negotiate more tie-ups with clinics in the Philippines, as well as to broaden its expansion to new areas, such as venturing into China.



The figures speak for themselves – within three months since its inception, Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd Landscape Division has landed seven new contracts in addition to the ad-hoc projects that are either in progress or already completed. And better yet, there are at least another four more contracts being negotiated now.

And this is possible only because of the solid reputation and track records of Seacare Environmental and its competent team. Through word-of-mouth referrals as well as recommendations by existing clients, the Landscape Division is steadily expanding from ad-hoc projects to per-annum contracts such as upgrading or maintenance works.

Says Mr Firos Angullia, Seacare Environmental Manager, "Seacare is a prominent and well-established name and many already know our company profile. We have completed projects for other clients and many know that they can trust Seacare to deliver jobs even beyond expectations."

Of these seven contracts spanning a year each, there are shopping centres, commercial buildings, a church, a condominium residential estate as well as a town house. Seacare Environmental's main responsibility is to maintain the landscape of the entire grounds.

SEACARE ENVIRONMENTAL ON

SOLID GROUND

"Seacare is a prominent and well-established name and many already know our company profile. We have completed projects for other clients and many know that they can trust Seacare to deliver jobs even beyond expectations."



The workers are divided into two teams – the mobile team and the station gardeners. The station gardeners are stationed at the grounds daily and put in charge of general works such as the preservation and upkeep of the area. The mobile team members on the other hand, goes on-site twice a month. Their job scope encompasses the supervision of the station gardeners' work, as well as chemical spraying and complex pruning, such as those above three metres, amongst other duties.

Mr Firos describes, "On average, we have eight workers for each job. These workers are personally trained on the job for three weeks in Basic Horticulture Practice, where they learn skills such as weeding, forking and pruning. Our Senior Supervisor, Mr Mohd Johari, who also goes on the field to supervise the works and liaises with the client directly on their needs and requirements, is the one in charge of training them. We are already looking into increasing our worker strength, in order to meet the demands of existing as well as new jobs."

The Landscape Division has more exciting plans in the pipeline, one of which is the intention to launch into the rental and supply of potted plants for offices and events by next year. With its expansion blueprint mapped out, each various project form part of a puzzle, which when pieced together, will depict a synergised business foundation.

"There are many landscaping companies in the industry, so competition is stiff. However, Seacare Environmental is a serious player, and we are here to stay. Even with the embarking of new plans, we take pride in a job well done, whether it is a small project or a year-long maintenance contract. Because customer satisfaction is definitely our priority, we are consistently trying to improve ourselves, our skills and know-how. Expanding and introducing new arenas to our business will enable us to become a full-fledge service provider offering both quality as well as competitive pricing and hence, match up to and even stay ahead of competition."

Mr Firos Angullia, Seacare Environmental Manager



The industry is poised for an overhaul with the industry players getting serious about raising restroom cleanliness and maintenance standards as well as developing a career path for Restroom Specialists. And with that, Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd has joined other service buyers and cleaning contractors in the industry in sending their cleaners for 'upgrading'!

All thanks to the National Trades Union Congress (NTUC), Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF), the World Toilet College (WTC) and Restroom Association (Singapore) (RAS), who have jointly



embarked on a job re-creation initiative for the restroom sector to enhance the restroom cleaners' job as well as bringing about cleaner restrooms.

Said Mr Abdul Kader, General Manager of Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd, "By professionalising and raising the productivity of the restroom cleaning job, restrooms can be cleaned and maintained more effectively and efficiently. More importantly, the job worth is increased, the restroom cleaners acquire skills and capabilities to take on the redesigned jobs and handle more tasks. This positive outcome is what Seacare Environmental actively pursues, and we are certainly all for the JRP efforts in the restroom sector."

With funding support from the Job Re-creation Programme (JRP), three Japanese trainers were engaged to conduct this three-day pilot course on Restroom Cleaning and Maintenance. Three cleaners from Seacare Environmental joined some 47 other Restroom Specialists at the Centre for Employability Skills (CES) from 20 to 22 June 2006.

The trainers engaged are Ms Saiko Sakamoto, Mr Atsuhiko Katsumata and Mr Nobuyuki Hoshino. They are leading experts in the industry, with Ms Sakamoto

'TOILET-TRAINED' SPECIALISTS

and Mr Katsumata having been involved in developing materials to train Restroom Specialists in Japan and Taiwan, and in forming the Japan Toilet Association Maintenance Institute.

Language was not a barrier as translation from Japanese to English and Mandarin was provided throughout the course. Ask 68-year-old Madam Wu Lay Eng, who was one of the three Seacare personnel amongst this pioneer batch of Restroom Specialists. From theory classes to practical training, Mdm Wu picked up many useful tips and skills that would help her perform more efficiently and effectively.

"We were taught to use new equipment and more effective means of cleaning. In the past, we thought cleaning the surface areas was sufficient. But at the course, they even demonstrated how to dismantle and fix simple basin pipes. This allows us to do a thorough cleaning, in even hard-to-reach places. Whether it is accumulated silt and stubborn stains, cleaning tasks that were previously carried out by technical cleaning teams, I can do it now too!" an excited Mdm Wu beamed.

Such intensive and innovative training efforts will reap better cleaning services, higher cost savings, higher productivity and more opportunities to offer greater value in future cleaning contracts involving trained Restroom Specialists.

From 2007, the WTC will market the Skills Redevelopment Programme (SRP) Course to other contractors, conduct training for subsequent intakes under the SRP and re-create hundreds of jobs in the restroom sector. An industry taskforce will also be formed to raise restroom cleanliness and maintenance standards, as well as develop a career path for the Restroom Specialists.

Looking at the way the government, union and employers are plunging into the act, it is certain that the old days of unclean toilets will soon be flushed out!


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SEACARE CO-OPERATIVE -

INSTITUTIONAL MEMBER OF CENTRE FOR SENIORS



With a maturing age structure in Singapore, elderly persons aged 65 years and over have increased rapidly over the past ten years at 3.7 per cent per annum. And naturally, caring for our elderly folks has become a responsibility we must prioritise.

The Board of Seacare Co-operative Ltd has accepted NTUC Eldercare Co-operative Ltd's invitation to be one of the Institutional Member of the 'Centre for Seniors' (CFS), a society dedicated to provide counselling and helpline services for the elderly and their families.

First mooted by NTUC and NTUC Eldercare, CFS is registered under the Registry of Societies and application for charity status will be submitted for CFS. Its larger mission is to lend a helping hand to older persons; it also aspires to inculcate greater public awareness about caring for and supporting an ageing population. At the same time, it also

advocates professionalism in remedial services and in developmental programmes for the older persons.

Seacare Co-operative Chairman, Mr Leow Ching Chuan, pointed out: "This project is a laudable initiative and deserves the utmost support of everyone. We want to help bring about a better quality of life for the elderly and through our participation in CFS, Seacare's efforts to reach out to senior citizens of Singapore will be enhanced. This is our corporate social responsibility and we see this as a great opportunity in which we can contribute to the society."

Apart from Seacare Co-operative, other Institutional Members of CFS comprise of NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Ltd, NTUC Healthcare Co-operative Ltd, Tsao Foundation and the Gerontological Society.

This project is a laudable initiative and deserves the utmost support of everyone. We want to help bring about a better quality of life for the elderly and through our participation in CFS, Seacare's efforts to reach out to senior citizens of Singapore will be enhanced. This is our corporate social responsibility and we see this as a great opportunity in which we can contribute to the society."

Board of Directors of CFS comprise of:

Advisor:

Chairman:

Vice-Chairman:

Executive Director:

Honorary Secretary:

Honorary Treasurer:

Members:

Mr Lim Boon Heng

Mr Tan Kin Lian

Dr Mary Ann Tsao

Dr Chiang Hai Ding

Mrs Mui Kok Kah Wei

Ms Lim Sia Hoe

Dr Lily Neo

Mr Tan Jing Bock

Mr Christopher Tay

Mr Laurence Wee

WHEN LEARNING & HAVING FUN BECOME ONE!

A team of 40 children and teachers hailing from Tianjin arrived in Singapore on 4 June 2006 for a six-day education cum cultural exchange. The children were from four kindergartens in Tianjin – Number Two, Number Eleven, Lianri and You Yuan Kindergartens.

Organised by the Cathay Future Preschool Group, Hui Ming Child Development Centre, a non-profit childcare centre, played host to the group of overseas visitors. The foreign guests were exposed to the multi-racial and multi-cultural context of our Singapore society. Indeed, what an eye-opening experience for the children it was!

From listening to a Malay teacher narrate a story in English, they also had the opportunity to sample the various types of local vegetables, some of which they had never even seen before. The children also had fun taking photographs with local students.



In return, the Tianjin team had also put up a performance at the Multi-Purpose Hall of



Seacare Building. They danced and sang; some did poetry recitation and calligraphy while others demonstrated their impressive Wushu moves.

Said an appreciative Mrs Wong, Acting Supervisor of Hui Ming, "Thank you very much for bringing these talented children here. It was such a great performance that they had put up. This is a very good opportunity for the children to mingle and make friends, and the teachers to learn from one another too. I do look forward to more of such sessions together in future!" "It is indeed a great pleasure to work with such wonderful people. Xinnet looks upon this as a good opportunity for us to forge ties with the Singapore community, while bridging distances with foreign or overseas groups."



Since 2003, Sino-Sing Center Pte Ltd has been working with Hui Ming Child Development Centre on a community level. After its inception in early 2006, Xinnet Education Centre Pte Ltd, a joint partnership between Seacare Education Pte Ltd and Sino-Sing Center Pte Ltd, has been keeping up with its efforts of rendering assistance to the childcare centre through various



means such as donating teaching resources such as hand puppets and books; and contributing mascots to decorate the centre's learning corners. What resulted is a lively display of wall murals anchoring the centre's Language Arts Corner, Discovery Corner, Home Corner and the entrance.

Xinnet's trainers have also made time to conduct classes at the centre, which includes designing lessons. Xinnet believes that this will be beneficial to the trainers, who will be able to gain practical experience by staying in touch with early childhood development of children and practices in Singapore as well as sharpen their skills. The trainers can reflect upon what they have been teaching, training and mentoring during the past year.

CONNECTING TO A NEW BEGINNING!

A new name and a new start – Seacare i-ConnecZ is all-ready to make its mark!

Previously known as Seacare TradeLink Pte Ltd, Seacare i-ConnecZ Pte Ltd officially kicked into operation on 20 June 2006. And this time, its business will not be limited to the trading & logistics business.

"Seacare TradeLink was renamed as Seacare i-ConnecZ Pte Ltd to better reflect the portfolio of its businesses, which now encompasses trading & logistics, events management, management of Club@52 and Seacare Multi-Purpose Hall, and more," Mr Kam Soon Huat, Chairman of Seacare i-ConnecZ, shares.

The Board of Directors of Seacare i-ConnecZ comprise of Chairman Mr Kam Soon Huat, and members Mr Anthony Chan and Mr David Sim.

Bringing things to an even more exciting level is the hatching of yet another new division under Seacare i-ConnecZ – the Seacare i-Shop Online Purchase Portal. Mr Kam reveals, "This project is still in the infancy stage and we are conceptualising the various aspects and its works. Basically, this is an online portal where everyone can access to shop for items such as gifts or even tech gadgets. Amongst other items, we are particularly looking at introducing a unique line of products, and this will be both exclusive, yet inclusive."

By that, Mr Kam went on to explain that i-Shop will be exclusive in the range of products on offer, but at the same time inclusive because access to the portal will not be restricted. "The extensive array of merchandise available will be across-the-board, because we want to cater to the different needs and wants of different groups. We are also in discussions now to consider the viability of having our own line of merchandise, from manufacturing to the design, to the final product. And that would give us the 'exclusive' edge of our products. In the long run, my vision for Seacare i-ConnecZ is to establish a core business, where its objective will be in-line with the Seacare Group's focus."

The consolidation of these operations will allow a better and more efficient management of corporate affairs, not only on a day-to-day basis, but also on an overall level.

Club@52 had recently underwent an overhaul and revealed a whole new look in September 2005. Its new highlights, which drew rave reviews, include new equipment such as plasma and LCD televisions; and the modern and sleek concept that optimises the ergonomics of the new club.

Said Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Chairman of the Seacare Group, "This is yet another initiative not only to benefit our members, but also to bring about greater convenience. In this digital age that we live in, we have to either keep up with the changes or be overtaken. And while we are focused about maintaining an enterprising spirit, we really are also 'renewing' ourselves and injecting new perspectives into our operations too."

"This is yet another initiative not only to benefit our members, but also to bring about greater convenience. In this digital age that we live in, we have to either keep up with the changes or be overtaken..."



WHICHEVER way you look at it... WHATEVER way you want it... WHENEVER you want it...

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Mon to Sat (9am to 11pm) \$40 per hour, minimum 3 hours

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- VCD Player Cum Recorder
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