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SAMUDRA

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MARITIME UNIONS OF THE WORLD

UNITE AGAINST PIRACY



SAMUDRA

Features

- 03** Our Goal for All Singaporeans
- 04** How Singapore Coped with the Downturn
- 05** ILO Convention, Geneva

International & Industrial Relations

- 08** Nearly a Million say "Enough is Enough!"
- 10** Errant Ship Owner Pays Dues
- 11** Seafarers' Tribute

Membership & Welfare

- 14** SMTS Launches Enhancement Training Programme in China & Malaysia
- 16** Grants and Awards to Motivate Students
- 18** Selamat Hari Raya Adilfitri!
- 20** SOS Members' Night at Scarlet City

Seacare Focus

- 22** Seacare Is On the Move
- 25** Foodfare Fanfare
- 26** Seacare Properties Invests in Growing Chinese Technology Building Materials Company
- 28** From Start-up to Key Player
- 30** Seacare Appoints Managerial Trio

OUR GOAL FOR ALL SINGAPOREANS

“OUR GOAL IS FOR ALL SINGAPOREANS TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF GROWTH.”



“WHEN SINGAPORE PROSPERS, YOU WILL BENEFIT FROM MANY GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES: BETTER DESIGNED HDB ESTATES, HIGHER QUALITY SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS, MORE MRT LINES AND NEW PLACES FOR RECREATION. BUT EACH ONE OF US HAS TO MAKE THE EFFORT.”

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong highlighted this in his national day message. He pointed out:

- EVERY STUDENT MUST BE KEEN TO LEARN AND GO AS FAR AS YOU CAN.
- EVERY WORKER MUST MASTER THE KNOWHOW AND SKILLS TO BE PRODUCTIVE AND COMPETITIVE.
- EVERY MANAGER MUST TRAIN AND MOTIVATE HIS STAFF TO MAXIMISE THEIR CONTRIBUTION AND POTENTIAL.

Only then can Singaporeans do the better jobs that our economy will create, and enjoy higher incomes, brighter opportunities, and more fulfilling lives.

The Government will support Singaporeans in this, by developing a first class education system for our young, and a comprehensive Continuing Education and Training (CET) programme to upgrade our workers.

“The Government is investing \$5.5 billion over 5 years to do this,” said Prime Minister Lee.

Two CET campuses in the East and West of Singapore will be built, and many schemes and incentives will be introduced to help companies and workers improve their productivity.

“I am glad employers and unions strongly support CET, because their support is crucial.”

On Foreign Workers

“We cannot do without a proportion of foreign workers, or a continuing flow of PRs and new citizens. Let us welcome them with an open heart, help them to fit in and encourage those who will become citizens to strike roots here. If we do this well, by the next generation, their children will be native Singaporeans. Remember, we ourselves are descendants of immigrants too. With new arrivals living and working harmoniously with those born here, we will keep Singapore dynamic, cosmopolitan, and successful.”

HOW SINGAPORE COPED WITH THE DOWNTURN

The Singapore delegation was invited by the International Labour Organization (ILO) to share in a fringe event how Singapore coped with the downturn last year and is riding the upturn this year at the annual International Labour Conference held in Geneva. Mr Lim Swee Say, NTUC Secretary-General, in his national day message, pointed out that the presentation was well received by the tripartite representatives of other countries.

They were impressed by

- our strategy of “cutting costs to save jobs” against “cutting jobs to save costs” adopted by many other countries.
- the “V-shaped recovery” of the Singapore economy, up from -9.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2009 to +15.5 per cent in the first quarter of 2010, one of the strongest rebounds for any economy.
- our ability to regain full employment so quickly, with our unemployment rate dropping from 3.3 per cent in the third quarter of 2009 to 2.2 per cent by the first quarter of 2010, one of the lowest in the world.

They wondered

- whether our government needed to borrow money to fund the Jobs Credit Scheme. We said, ‘No, it came from our reserves’.
- whether we will ever be able to replenish the \$4.5 billion drawn from our reserves since many countries are running into growing budget deficits and huge government debts. We said, ‘Yes, perhaps over two to three years. Because we make sure that every dollar is put to good use and every extra dollar is put back into our reserves’.
- how we were able to convince our workers to accept wage freezes and even wage cuts without protests or strikes. We shared with them our flexible wage system, and how our national leaders and corporate management led by example by taking deeper wage cuts first.
- how we managed to keep the trust and preserve unity during a downturn as severe as this. We told them that to wait until there is a downturn to build trust is too late. We believe in building trust during good times so that we can stay united during bad times.
- if we will continue with the Jobs Credit Scheme in 2010 and beyond. We said, ‘No, because our businesses have to stay competitive without government subsidies. We also need to save our surpluses and get ready for the next global downturn’.

- if our workers are rewarded in the upturn. We said, ‘Yes, otherwise, trust will be broken and we will not be able to mobilise our workers to tighten their belts in future downturns’.
- how tripartism could be so uniquely effective in Singapore at a time when it is either breaking down or not functioning in many other countries.

“WE EXPLAINED THAT WHEN TIMES ARE GOOD, WE WORK HARD TOGETHER TO BUILD UP TWO TYPES OF CAPITAL – FINANCIAL CAPITAL, BY BEING ONE OF THE MOST PRO-BUSINESS ECONOMIES IN THE WORLD; AND SOCIAL CAPITAL, BY BEING ONE OF THE MOST PRO-WORKER NATIONS IN THE WORLD. SO, BY THE TIME WE ARE HIT BY A GLOBAL DOWNTURN, WE ALREADY HAVE IN PLACE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND A HIGH LEVEL OF TRUST AMONG LABOUR, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT TO RALLY US TO RESPOND IN UNITY.

SINGAPORE’S APPROACH TO TRIPARTISM IS GOOD FOR OUR WORKERS. WE AVOIDED MASSIVE RETRENCHMENTS AND PREVENTED A RAPID RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT. IT IS ALSO GOOD FOR OUR BUSINESSES. WE PRESERVED OUR ECONOMIC CAPACITY AND UPGRADED OUR ECONOMIC CAPABILITY TO GROW AGAIN IN A GLOBAL RECOVERY.”

ILO CONVENTION, GENEVA

MLC 2006 AND CONVENTION NO. 185

One is seen as a 'Bill of Rights' which will go a long way towards ensuring decent work for seafarers, no matter where ships sail and irrespective of the flag they fly. The other is intended to facilitate the temporary admission of genuine seafarers to foreign territory for shore leave and for transit, transfer or repatriation.

To help ensure a level playing field for quality ship owners who may have to compete with ships of substandard conditions, the MLC 2006 will come into force 12 months after 30 member states with total share of at least 33 per cent of the world gross tonnage ratify the convention; while the temporary admission of genuine seafarers to foreign territory for reasons of shore leave, transit, transfer or repatriation will be realised through the ratification of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention No. 185.

Organised by the International Labour Organization (ILO), these were the two meetings on agenda as SOS General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat and Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd Manager Ms Sharon Li joined delegates from all over the world at the ILO office in Geneva from 20 to 24 September to turn the conventions into reality.

Delegates included governments, ship owner representatives, advisers, seafarer representatives, seafarer unions, and representatives of non-governmental international organisations.





FORMATION OF A MLC 2006 COMMITTEE

Noting that the MLC 2006 is expected to come into force in 2011, the governing body of the ILO decided at its 306th session to establish a Preparatory Tripartite MLC 2006 Committee which when established under the MLC 2006 is to be modelled after the future “Special Tripartite Committee (STC)” when it comes into full force.

The Preparatory Committee comprised 10 representatives nominated by the ISF and ITF together with government representatives of interested member states.

“The Committee identified matters which would potentially require the attention of the STC once the MLC 2006 has been ratified. They also gave their views on the sort of preparation and standing orders to be performed by the STC – taking into account its various roles under the MLC 2006,” related Ms Sharon Li.

To date, 10 member states have ratified, namely, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Liberia, Marshall Island, Norway, Panama, and Spain while several representatives indicated that they expected their countries to ratify either by the end of 2010 or during 2011.

Governments of countries who had yet to ratify presented their preparation reports while members who did, shared helpful tips and steps they took to implement the MLC 2006 – exchanging ideas and solutions along the way.





CONVENTION NO. 185

Convention No. 185 is currently ratified by 18 ILO member States: Albania, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Madagascar, Republic of Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Vanuatu and Yemen. Lithuania, another ILO member, has also made a declaration of provisional application.

Many governments of member states expressed their opinions on the convention and provided fresh insights of the steps taken by their countries towards ratification. Thoughts on the database infrastructure and what the identity document should contain were articulated and discussed at length during meeting proceedings.

SOS General Secretary Mr Kam shared that the purpose of these consultations was to have an exchange of views between governments of member states that have ratified or are seriously considering ratification of the MLC 2006 and Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention No. 185.

“Indeed, the sessions we had were engaging, free flowing, and invigorating as members shared common difficulties in their interpretations and applications to particular sectors arising during convention preparations. Several countries also shared their concerns on the protection of seafarers’ data and the political, technical and infrastructure costs to implement the Convention No. 185. We are of the hope that this synergy between international bodies, seafaring authorities and the government will add to the expedition of ratifying both conventions.”

NEARLY A MILLION SAY

“Enough is Enough!”

INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST PIRACY



Frequently seafarers are being kidnapped and exposed to increasing risks of injury or even death. Seafarers transporting the world's goods sail through pirate infested waters. Their families and loved ones suffer worry amid growing uncertainty.

Today there are 354 seafarers and 16 ships held hostage and every day hundreds more risk their lives by sailing through the danger zone.

ITF, International Shipping Federation, ship operators, welfare organisations and trade union affiliates got in on the act and rallied together to call on governments worldwide to put an end to the scourge of piracy off the coast of Somalia, and its threat to seafarers once and for all.

The campaign urged governments to deploy resources and work to find effective solutions to the growing piracy problem; take immediate and concrete steps to secure the release and safe return of kidnapped seafarers to their families; and work within the international community to secure a stable and peaceful future for Somalia and its people.

ITF General Secretary, Mr David Cockroft commented: “At a time when some countries are actively escorting merchant ships and pursuing pirates and a few – too few – are prosecuting them when caught, the majority, including many of those who make the most from shipping, are doing little or nothing. For us, this campaign is about making everyone step up and shoulder their responsibilities.”

On World Maritime Day, 23 September 2010, the 920,000-strong petition was delivered to the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Mr Efthimios Mitropoulos in London, while a joint letter from all the co-sponsors was sent to the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-Moon that same day highlighting the urgent need for governments worldwide to work together to end piracy.

“For too long a time we have remained indifferent and apathetic to the plight of seafarers who have become neglected victims of piracy. Thanks to ITF and its affiliates, we hope that international bodies like the United Nations and IMO and governments can now put their backs into this campaign and add muscle to stamping out this threat once and for all.” – SOS General Secretary Mr Kam Soon Huat

“This is fantastic news. We are buoyed by the fact that the number of signatories have surpassed the intended 500,000 target by nearly twofold! We hope this petition will take us a step closer to bringing about much needed change in guarding seafarers against the global threat of piracy.” – SOS Executive Secretary Mr Daniel Tan



It was a world-wide campaign by all International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) affiliates to gather signatures on a petition against piracy.

On the home front, SOS initiated joint efforts to collect signatures, working with Seacare drop-in centre for International Seafarers at Pasir Panjang Terminal Building, The mission to Seafarers, Seafarers care centre in Jurong Port, and International Drop-in centre for seafarers at Keppel Container Terminal Entrance. All in all, we garnered a satisfactory response.



ERRANT SHIP OWNER PAYS DUES



WAGES TOTALING US\$23,000 WAS RECLAIMED FOR SIX MYANMAR CREW MEMBERS WHO REQUESTED TO BE REPATRIATED AND US\$190,000 MORE A MONTH LATER FOR REMAINING CREW MEMBERS.

SOS had earlier received a call from International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) informing that an understanding had been reached with the owner of Split Ship Management Pte Ltd to pay the crew members of the Panama flagged MV Poseidon V.

The vessel was at anchorage for bunkering and was slated to leave for China next.

While in Singapore, ITF requested that no action be taken against the vessel and that a crew list with the particulars and contact details of the Myanmar seafarers be obtained in order for their wages to be paid out through the Seafarers' Union of Burma.

SOS visited the vessel on 28 August and conveyed the news that the owners have agreed to pay all outstanding wages



but took immediate action and wasted no time in getting the Myanmar crew's wages and repatriating those who refused to continue sailing with the Poseidon V.

Most of the other seafarers who were new crew members declined repatriation as they were afraid and intimidated by their employers. However, upon witnessing their colleagues receiving their monies, they came forward – complaining of not receiving three to four months of their salary.

Trusting that the owner would be timelier with his payouts after this incident, their patience grew thin when he delayed and evaded the matter of paying their salaries time and again.

Shortly after receiving an email complaint issued by the ship's master, Capt Veljko Rakocovic, the vessel arrived once again at Anchorage on 29 October for bunkering.

The crew members rejected the initial offer of two months basic salary for compensation tabled by the owner's representative. The owner relented with a counter offer of a full month and one month basic salary hours later which resulted in the payout of about US\$190,000 in salaries and compensations, and the signing off and repatriation of crew members.





SEAFARERS' TRIBUTE ON WORLD MARITIME DAY

In Singapore, World Maritime Day was celebrated on 23 September at the Maritime House in the Singapore Mariner's Club.

This marked the eighth year that the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) was joined by the Singapore Organisation of Seamen (SOS) and Singapore Maritime Officers Union (SMOU) in sponsoring and distributing hampers to 600 ships and 12,000 seafarers.

These hampers which contained food, caps, movie VCDs and magazines, were served as tokens to show seafarers that their services are valued and that they are remembered and supported by the larger maritime community.

MPA chairman Mr Lucien Wong presented 30 representatives from the shipping industry with hampers while remaining hampers were distributed by shipping agents to other vessels that call at port on World Maritime Day.

Mr Wong said: **"Seafarers are often out of touch with their families, friends and the wider world when out in the open sea. We recognise their many sacrifices and to show our appreciation for their dedication, MPA, together with the local seafarer unions, have been presenting gift hampers to ships that call at our port every World Maritime Day since 2003."**

President of SOS, Mr Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim who was present at the ceremony with SOS Vice President, Mr Mohamad B Abu Bakar said, **"We are privileged to be able to do this every year. It is also fitting that 2010 is the Year of Seafarers as seafarers deserve our utmost encouragement, support and due recognition for the tremendous sacrifices they make on a daily basis."**





MPA Chief Executive Mr Lam Yi Young also presented a financial grant of S\$100,000 to the seafarer missions in Singapore to demonstrate support for the work of the missions.

The funds will help support a wide array of foreign seafarer welfare services ranging from ship visitations to counselling services and pastoral care at mission centres when seafarers call at port in Singapore.





In addition to the hampers distributed to ships on World Maritime Day, to commemorate 2010 as the Year of the Seafarer, SOS also distributed thermo-mugs with printed “Year of the Seafarer” logos together with goodie bags containing human flu thermometers and issues of Samudra to all ships covered under their ship visit programme at various times of the year.

ABOUT WORLD MARITIME DAY

World Maritime Day is celebrated annually by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to draw attention to the importance of shipping safety, maritime security and the marine environment and to emphasise a particular aspect of the IMO’s work.

The Council of the IMO had decided that this year’s theme for World Maritime Day be titled “2010: Year of the Seafarer”.

Appropriately so, “Year of the Seafarer” was chosen to give the IMO and the international maritime community the opportunity to pay tribute to the world’s 1.5 million seafarers for their enormous contributions to world trade and the global maritime community and in recognition of the risks they contend with daily during the course of their duties such as pirate attacks, unwarranted detention, and abandonment, etc.



SMTS LAUNCHES ENHANCEMENT TRAINING IN CHINA & MALAYSIA

With more than 185 ratings benefitting from the course after the addition of 45 new graduates in May this year, the Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) launched its 5th Seacare Quality Rating Training (SQRT) in Nantong, China on 11 October and the Seacare Technical Skill Enhancement Training Programme in Ipoh on 19 October 2010.

The emphasis of the training at Ipoh was to enhance the current skill sets of experienced seafarers; while the SQRT at Nantong, China focused on the learning of the English language.

Jointly organised by SOS, under the SMTS and Neptune Shipmanagement Services Pte Ltd, the Seacare Technical Skill Enhancement Training Programme was held from 19 to 27 October 2010 at the Ungku Omar Polytechnic in Ipoh, Malaysia.

In a bid to enhance the skills of Neptune Shipmanagement's ratings, the training programme was introduced to help seafarers serving on container vessels perform better in their supporting functions.

Bringing together some 14 ratings, the trainees in Ipoh all had seafaring experience, with several having worked ashore for some years.

They were taught an interesting combination of 24 subjects ranging from shipboard safety topics like Hazardous Material Handling – Dangerous Goods, Chemicals and Paints; and Fire Fighting and Fire Prevention, to practical seafaring 101s like Steering, Bridge Watchkeeping, Bunker Operations and Mooring Operations.

Over in Nantong China, the month long SQRT which ended on 5 November taught Maritime Technical Skills and Elementary English to trainees. It also included hands on topics on personal grooming, personal hygiene in preventing the spread of disease, correct ways of handling food preparation, useful body language to express discomfort, fire fighting and emergency response drills, as well as military training to instill and cultivate necessary discipline.



The Seacare Maritime Training Scheme (SMTS) is taking seafarers to a whole new level.



The SMTS is a scheme established to supply SOS CBA vessels with quality seafarers and to cater to the training, re-training and pre-sea training needs of ratings.

Conducted by the Nantong Shipping College and Singhai Marine Services (S) Pte Ltd, the training saw a new cohort of 45 trainees living in the Nantong Shipping College and having their meals and activities within the training centre.

Trainees were put through the paces of 14 lessons on common seafaring subjects and four lessons on Deck, Engine and Cook courses to enhance the capabilities of experienced seafarers as well as equip new seafarers with the necessary knowledge to adapt to life on board a vessel.

Comprehensive topics on International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS), as well as international conventions such as MARPOL (Prevention of Pollution on Ships), SOLAS Convention, PSC inspection and Introduction to the MLC 2006 made sure that seafarers understood their rights and deserved protection at work.

In addition to brushing up on their English and familiarising themselves with general terms and conversational skills to prepare for communicating with seafarers from other countries, specific Deck, Engine and cooking topics were also offered to cater to the various positions of the trainees.

These included technical and applied skills training such as Deck Equipment & Tools, Cargo Handling, Watch-keeping, Anchoring, Hot work Permit, Bunkering, and Responses to emergencies in the Engine room.





GRANTS AND AWARDS TO SOS STUDY GRANT PRESENTATION CEREMONY 2010

“Why are we placing so much emphasis on education?” This was the question posed by Guest-of-Honour, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General, Mr Ong Ye Kung to award recipients at this year’s SOS Study Grant Presentation Ceremony held on 2 October 2010 at NTUC Centre Auditorium.

“Study Grant ceremonies are extremely significant events for Unions, including SOS. Education is important because your parents join the union for a clear purpose: to secure your families’ livelihoods in the hope of better jobs and better lives. Better life comes about when you can do better than your parents. You will get better education, acquire more skills, secure better jobs, and chart out good career paths. This is every parent’s wish for their children.”

Mr Ong’s opening statement is the reason why many unions over the last decade continue to support education through the distribution of grants, awards, bursaries and scholarships. SOS is no exception.

This is the 33rd year the union is organising this event, to provide much

needed aid to members who are parents with school going children.

This year, \$46,100 in educational grants and awards were disbursed to 143 students pursuing their primary to post-secondary education of whom 18 were from the Primary school level; 54 from Secondary schools; 13 from ITE; 45 from Junior Colleges, Centralised Institutes and Polytechnics; and 13 from Universities.

On top of the study grants, SOS Best Awards with a combined worth of \$2,400 were also presented to 12 students in recognition of their academic excellence.

With a small part contribution from NTUC’s U Care Scholarship and Bursary Top Up Scheme to the \$48,500 in grants and awards given out, SOS and NTUC showed their solidarity in providing the





MOTIVATE STUDENTS

best available help for their members by reaching out to more beneficiaries this year.

President of SOS, Mr Mohamed Idris B Mohamed Ibrahim, who in his welcome speech recognised parents in the sacrifices they make for their children, paid tribute to them for all their efforts:

"To all parents who are amongst us today, I am sure you are filled with pride for your children's achievement. You play a vital role in your children's education which goes beyond the purely academic aspects of education. Thank you."

When asked to share if he had any anecdotes about his own life in the course of his own study award, Mr Ong recounted about going to university on government scholarship.

"Personally, if I had not gone overseas, I would have been a very different person. I would not have been able to afford my education. So my government scholarship was life changing. In fact, all scholarships are generally life altering.

In the case of today's grant presentation, although the recipients were not given exorbitant amounts, we hope that these monetary awards will go some way towards helping the members

financially. Just like the NTUC FairPrice vouchers, social benefits, and subsidised social activities, we hope that this too will help them cope better with their financial responsibilities. I'm confident SOS will continue to strongly support the Study Grant programme."

Children below the ages of 12 were in for a pleasant surprise too when they received door gifts containing stationery items and water bottles as the ceremony was held in conjunction with Children's Day.



"This is his first year getting the best award and we're all very proud of him."

Mr Jamhal Bin Yacob said this of his 8 year old son Mohd Ashriq Jamhar.

"My son is in Indonesia for an attachment right now. When I emailed him the good news, he was elated to receive the award. In his email reply, he thanked his family and SOS for the support."



Mr Ishak Bin Othman receiving the Best Award on his son's behalf. Mohammad Shazarul Bin Ishak, an ITE student, is getting the best award for the first time.

"I want to be a lawyer when I grow up. I want to earn a lot of money to buy properties."



9 year old Ho Zhi Qi who's receiving the best award three times in a row.

"I was quite shocked when I found out that I would be receiving the best award. These study awards are good for families who need that extra help. My dad is retired and yet we still enjoy so many SOS benefits."



Tan Wen Ming, 23, studies Mechanical Engineering in NTU.



SELAMAT HARI RAYA ADILFITRI!

Held on 17 September in conjunction with World Maritime Day on 23 September, this year's Hari Raya Celebration paid tribute to SOS' seafaring members and their families.

Attended by 387 guests, including 60 from Saint Theresa's Home, Ramakrishna Mission Boys' Home and Darul Ihsan Orphanage, the Concorde Hotel ballroom was transformed into a kaleidoscope of colours as SOS members and their families came decked out in traditional baju kurung and dressed in their "Raya Best".

The guest-of-Honour for the evening was SOS Advisor, Mr Zulkifli Mohammed, whose arrival was joyfully announced by a Malay percussion group.

It was a feast for the senses as entertainment items for the evening included Malay celebrity singers singing songs in not just Malay and English but also in Mandarin – to the amusement of Chinese guests; a traditional dance; stage games that include children's participation, plus an all-female Dikir Barat group clapping to the tunes of 'Dayung Sampan'.

SOS Hari Raya Celebration cum World Maritime Day 2010





Popular local funnyman, Mr Hussain Saaban cracked the guests up with his comedic antics while seafaring members were invited on stage to share about their lives as seamen and the challenges they encountered.

Twenty lucky draw prizes each consisting NTUC Fairprice Vouchers and a Corning Ware 1-litre covered sauce pan were given away while each resident received a bag of personal items as door gifts, a green packet of \$50 – personally distributed by Mr Zulkifli Mohammed and a special 'Year of the Seafarer 2010' commemorative thermo-mug.



SOS MEMBERS' NIGHT AT SCARLET CITY



7 August was a night to let their hair down and let themselves be serenaded by evergreen tunes as 170 members were treated to a sumptuous buffet spread and good entertainment amid a free flow of stout and beer.

As previous members' night were at Club@52, this was the first time that Members' Night was held at Scarlet City at Ang Mo Kio Hub.

The mood was relaxed and buoyant as members shared laughs while others showed off their silky skills by gamely dancing to Mandarin and Malay tunes belted out by the artistes.

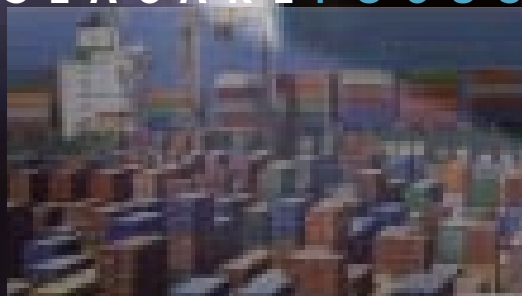
Members were all smiles as 20 lucky winners went home with attractive lucky draw prizes.



SEACAREFOCUS

SEACAREFOCUS

SEACAREFOCUS





SEACARE IS ON THE MOVE FORWARD AND UPWARD

Despite more challenges and competition in recent years, we continue to move forward with cautious optimism. Always looking ahead to the future, we strive to ensure long term sustainability on safeguarding our resources and investments, without compromising the interests of all Seacare members and shareholders.

– Seacare Executive Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan





Seacare 16th Annual General Meeting was held on 28 September 2010 at the Seacare Building. The mood in the Club@52 was one that spelled hope and optimism. Hope because as a co-operative, Seacare has a good track record of meeting social objectives with business solutions. Optimistic because the Co-operative is in the good hands of directors, management staff and support team who are passionate about what they do.

Below, we hear the heartbeat of Mr Leow Ching Chuan, Seacare Executive Chairman.

SAMUDRA: The year under reference was a year filled with uncertainties. How would you rate Seacare's performance?

Leow: We are rather relieved to come through with relatively few setbacks. While we are quite satisfied with what we have managed to achieve in the trying circumstances, we have to state our performance has not been entirely up to expectation.

What do the key business indicators of the Seacare Group show?

Our group revenue in the reference year fell below \$26 million, a drop of about 7 per cent. However, in the same period, our group profit rose to about \$1.73 million, almost a fourfold increase, which is not too significant. To complete the picture, our staff strength fell to 998 employees, a decrease of about 14 per cent. It is obviously not a completely satisfactory situation.

Yet Seacare has managed to maintain its momentum in operational activities.

This is largely due to our good management and good staff support. Being a business organisation, the main thing is that, on the whole, we are able to function well and properly as a group despite unfavourable circumstances.

What are some of the business possibilities that Seacare is exploring?

The management of Seacare Group held a summit workshop on the theme of redefining the future and keynote addresses were focussed on the effective exploitation of new possible business opportunities such as in areas pertaining to the environment. The business possibilities thrown up would be reflected on our subsequent strategic planning on the future of our Seacare Group.

We are very likely to encounter greater and fiercer competition than we have up to now. It becomes more imperative than ever for us to reassess and redefine our future direction with a view to make more long-term sustainable investments so as to ensure our Seacare Group remain viable in the future.



In his report, Mr Leow also shared some of the Seacare highlights of the year under reference:

- ✓ Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd (SMMC) appointed by the UK P&I Club and the American P&I Club to be their approved medical centre to conduct the pre-employment medical examination in Singapore.
- ✓ SMMC now offers digital radiographic (x-ray) services.
- ✓ Magnum Marine Services Pte Ltd (MMS) contracted to provide well-known ship owners with shipboarding services for chartered ships calling at Singapore.
- ✓ MMS acquired a new 12-seater passenger van to maintain high standard of its road transport transfer services.
- ✓ Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd commended for its quick and proactive response in the part-time and flexi-work schemes. Its rewarding experience was repeated under the enhanced and extended flexi-work scheme in the reference year.
- ✓ Seacare Manpower Services paid for various training courses for its employees so as to add value to their assigned work at schools.
- ✓ Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd has taken on the management of Seacare Medical Scheme, Seacare Maritime Training Scheme and Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme.
- ✓ Seacare Properties (Philippines) Pte Ltd began operating under the Seacare Sailors' Home Scheme, the Seacare Sailors' Home in the Sunshine Garden Condominium which Seacare Properties had co-developed.
- ✓ Sunshine Garden Condominium II launched with good response.
- ✓ Seacare Hotel would be expected to be completed in late 2011.

FOODFARE FANFARE

MS SHENA FOO ASSUMES NTUC FOODFARE DIRECTORSHIP

The 16th AGM of NTUC Foodfare which was held on 14 September 2010, saw the appointment of Seacare Group General Manager Ms Shena Foo as NTUC Foodfare Co-operative Ltd's new director. Samudra finds out what this new appointment holds in store for the pleasant and industrious Ms Foo.

SAMUDRA: FIRST OF ALL, CONGRATULATIONS! HOW WERE YOU NOMINATED?

Thanks! I was nominated by virtue of SOS' involvement as an Institutional Member (IM) of NTUC Foodfare. As an IM, SOS nominates a candidate to stand elected as a member to Foodfare's Board of Directors. We were previously represented by Mr Leow Ching Chuan, who had retired at the 16th AGM. SOS's new nomination was supported by NTUC and I was duly elected for a three year term.

SAMUDRA: TELL US MORE ABOUT YOUR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AS DIRECTOR OF FOODFARE?

NTUC Foodfare is registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. Along with other Board members, I'm responsible for ensuring the proper administration and management of the affairs of the Society and the fulfilment of NTUC Foodfare's vision to be the best-in-class social enterprise and a market leader in the Food Services industry.

SAMUDRA: WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACHIEVE IN YOUR NEW ROLE?

I look forward to facilitating Foodfare's social mission of moderating prices of cooked food in Singapore by providing a pricing benchmark for the industry to follow.

In this way, I hope to contribute towards the strengthening of NTUC Foodfare's ability to help the needy, as well as to grow the Retail, Food Manufacturing and Institutional Catering business arms of the Society.



SAMUDRA: HOW DOES SOS INVOLVEMENT IN FOODFARE AFFECT SOS MEMBERS?

Affordable cooked food will be made accessible to union members as a \$2 economic rice concept stall was successfully piloted at Aljunied hawker centre for union members and needy residents to enjoy a proper rice meal. The meal comprises two side dishes and one meat dish at \$2.

Under the NTUC Value Meal Set programme, union members will also get to enjoy substantial price discounts of up to 15% at all Foodfare foodcourts.

The opening of new foodcourt at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Yishun adds to Foodfare's current chain of 11 outlets island-wide and offers good and affordable alternative dining options for the benefit of union members including SOS members and their dependents.

SOS/Seacare extends its heartiest congratulations to Ms Shena Foo and wishes her every success in her new appointment.





SEACARE PROPERTIES INVESTS IN GROWING CHINESE TECHNOLOGY BUILDING MATERIALS COMPANY

Seacare Properties Pte Ltd has collaborated with Chip Eng Seng Corporation Ltd to invest RMB 7.5 million (\$5 million) for a 70% share in Fujian OBON Building Materials Co., Ltd.

While Seacare owns 10% stake, CES' wholly-owned subsidiary, CES-China Holdings Pte Ltd (CES-China) takes on the remaining 60%. The remaining shares are held by some of the existing shareholders of Fujian Obon.

Fujian Obon is a Sino-foreign equity joint venture company established with limited liability in Quanzhou City, Fujian Province, the People's Republic of China on 29 September 2009. The company manufactures and distributes light weight energy saving wall material. Its wall paneling products are an alternative to solid bricks and take a shorter time to install compared to the traditional method of erecting and cementing wall.



“OUR INVESTMENT IN FUJIAN OBON RESONATES WELL WITH SEACARE’S COMMITMENT TO CONSERVING THE WORLD’S RESOURCES. BY COLLABORATING WITH THE LEADING CONSTRUCTION AND PROPERTY GROUP CHIP ENG SENG CORPORATION LTD, WE ALSO GET TO TAP ON THEIR STRENGTHS AND EXPERIENCE WHILE MAKING OUR PRESENCE FELT IN CHINA CONSTRUCTION SECTOR,” SAID MR LEOW CHING CHUAN, SEACARE EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN.



With the signing of the Equity Transfer Agreement, the transferees and existing shareholders have also entered into a joint venture to set out their respective rights and obligations and the basis upon which they have agreed to operate, manage and administer Fujian Obon.

Fujian Obon has a registered capital of RMB 5 million. Taking into account the net book value of Fujian Obon's plant and equipment, its experienced management, well trained workforce, production capacity, negotiations and with the consenting approvals of both buyers and sellers, Seacare Properties signed on the dotted line. The unaudited net book value and unaudited net tangible asset value of Fujian Obon as at 30 June 2010 was RMB 8.1 million.

“THIS IS A STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FOR CHIP ENG SENG AS IT OFFERS SIGNIFICANT SYNERGISTIC ADVANTAGES TO OUR EXISTING BUSINESS. IT WILL ENHANCE OUR VERTICAL INTEGRATION EFFORTS IN OUR CONSTRUCTION ARM AS IT COMPLEMENTS OUR GROWING PRECAST BUSINESS VERY WELL. IT IS IN LINE WITH OUR OVERSEAS EXPANSION STRATEGY AND IT ALSO PRESENTS OUR FIRST FORAY INTO THE DYNAMIC CHINA MARKET,” MR LIM TIAM SENG, CHIP ENG SENG EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, HIGHLIGHTED.





Ms Dawn Kong, Mr Goh Yeow Tin and Mr Kong Mun Kwong helped to steer WaterTech in uncharted waters.

FROM START-UP TO KEY PLAYER

With continuing multi-faceted help of angel partners and SPRING SEEDS Capital, WaterTech is poised to take on a bigger role in the eco-engineering industry.

A start-up incorporated in 2004, WaterTech Pte Ltd has already established a strong brand name in the eco-engineering industry. Specialising in water and waste water treatment, WaterTech focuses on markets in high development potential regions in Asia, such as the non-coastal areas of north-eastern China, the Middle East and Indo-China.

Securing and developing projects in these regions was difficult. Banks viewed WaterTech as “higher than normal risk” and, therefore, were not willing to extend loans. WaterTech also had to pit against the more impressive and bigger MNCs for the projects. Lack of credibility, compounded by the recession in 2007 left WaterTech with little chance of expanding beyond Singapore.



ATTRACTING ANGEL INVESTORS

WaterTech's fortune changed when SPRING SEEDS Capital, Mr Kong Mun Kwong and his group of angel partners took a stake in the start-up. Since then, Mr Kong has been providing guidance in restructuring the company and charting its path. He has also been instrumental in bringing in other angel investors such as NTUC Seacare and KOTA Holdings Pte Ltd to reinforce the business mentorship, and acquiring new funds.

Mr Kong also brought in Mr Goh Yeow Tin, a former engineer to be the Chairman of WaterTech's Board. Together, they helped to strategise, develop and implement a plan for WaterTech to become a significant player in the eco-engineering industry.




LEVERAGING ON CREDIBILITY

With its credibility increased tremendously, WaterTech was able to secure bigger projects, such as the two Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) wastewater treatment projects with the Chinese government. They have successfully completed the two BOOT projects, which will provide minimum guaranteed revenues for the next 30 years.

Today, WaterTech has grown from a specialist sub-contractor to a systems designer and provider with skills in packaging and managing BOOT and Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) projects. They have just secured another new BOOT project in north-east China.

Recently, WaterTech has also acquired exclusive access to a new patentable water treatment technology. Armed with new cost-effective technologies and systems, and capabilities to create customised solutions to suit local conditions and purposes for global clients, WaterTech is poised to take on a bigger role in the eco-engineering industry.



INVESTING WITH A DIFFERENCE

The transformation of WaterTech venture can be attributed to Mr Kong, who has gone beyond the role of a venture investor. His commitment and desire to see WaterTech succeed drove him to engage other experienced mentors like Mr Goh and Ms Dawn Kong (Executive Director of Kota Holdings), to provide new resources and "hands-on" assistance to WaterTech. Together they groomed a united and dedicated management team with a greater focus and vision.

Mr Kong advises, "In whatever we do, even as a venture capital investor, there is still a need to have a dare-to-be different attitude and go that extra mile with a passion."

With the help of its angel investors and SPRING SEEDS Capital, WaterTech looks set to make waves in the eco-engineering industry.

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SEACARE

APPOINTS MANAGERIAL TRIO

They were recently promoted in September, while she had just joined the Seacare group of companies in April this year. Meet Mr Zainulabbidin Omar and Mr Koh Boon Wee – Nursing Managers with Seacare Maritime Medical Centre Pte Ltd (SMMC), and Ms Kathryn Ang – newly recruited Manager with Seacare Foundation Pte Ltd.

SAMUDRA: FIRST UP, CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THREE OF YOU! TELL OUR SAMUDRA READERS A BIT ABOUT YOURSELVES AND WHAT MADE YOU JOIN THE SEACARE GROUP?

ZAINUL: Prior to joining SMMC, I was an Industrial Nurse for 10 years working in the shipyard industry onboard rigs and vessels. SMMC offered me a dynamic and progressive environment to work both in the clinic as well as onboard vessels. I joined them in November 2000 as an Operations Officer and have many opportunities to fine-tune my interpersonal skills, initiative, and problem solving abilities.



BOON WEE: Zainul and I came in about the same time. I was a surgical ward staff nurse before arriving in SMMC in October 2000. It has been a very eventful 10 years ever since.



KATHRYN: I joined Seacare in April this year. I was from the business division of another Co-operative and felt that I had done enough for the social entrepreneurship area - guiding many disadvantaged to employment and in the process regaining their self-esteem. It was the right time to move on, and re-enter the commercial arena to further expand my corporate horizons. Seacare is well-known in the market place as a Co-operative with a heart for its staff welfare and is a supportive community partner. Its mission is in line with its vision and well placed work structures. Hence, when the opportunity came knocking, I made the transition and here I am!

SAMUDRA: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR PROMOTIONS OR NEW WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND HOPE TO CONTRIBUTE IN YOUR NEW ROLES?

KATHRYN: When I started I had the opportunity to work at some of the companies within the Seacare group, and this helped broadened my perspective of the organisation. Seacare is an established empire, and its power lies in its leaders who have created the organisation's values, environment, culture and this is immeasurable. I'm excited and relish the opportunity to contribute my time and talents. With my wide exposure to various work places, I hope to add value to the Corporate division of Seacare and its group of companies.

BOON WEE: Zainul's and my duties haven't changed much. We still attend to our regular functions of going on board ships to administer vaccinations and drug and alcohol tests. We follow the doctors on their medical consultation rounds and can do so four to five times up to 30 to 40 vessels on average each month. It's nice to have one's work recognised with a promotion for the experience gained after 10 years of service. We are grateful, happy and extremely appreciative of SMMC's gesture for granting us this promotion.



ZAINUL: Yes. For the most part, our work scopes remain the same – managing patient process, sustaining profitability while maintaining the highest quality of service to patients in accordance with Ministry of Health policies and procedures and all relevant legislation. We also manage the daily operations and clinical settings of the clinic, take charge of policies within the clinic to ensure they are adhered to, and establish positive customer/patient care experiences. I hope to continue giving my best for patient care and support the business management and operations of the clinic to ensure its overall success.

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Indulge in the smooth, mellow taste of this premium Scotch whiskey and swoon over its honeyed, round and creamy taste.

+

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WaterTech Pte Ltd

环亚水务科技有限公司

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