

Feb + Mar 2007

samudra

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

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Go On Glowing!
Keep On Growing!

feb + mar 2007

samudra

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Congratulations



Brother Lim Boon Heng

**Minister, Prime Minister's Office and
Immediate Past NTUC Secretary-General
on receiving
The Distinguished Comrade of Labour Award**

Brother Lim Boon Heng has been a good staunch friend of SOS, as well as having been its Adviser. Despite his heavy commitment in the NTUC, he thought deeply about the perennial problem of jobless seamen who are SOS members, whose plight he greatly sympathised. It was Brother Lim who inspired and encouraged SOS to set up Seacare Co-operative to find jobs for seamen and strengthen SOS's funding. Today, SOS and Seacare stand tall and steady among their respective trade unions and co-operatives, a proud testimony to the vision and foresight of Brother Lim. SOS and Seacare are forever indebted to Brother Lim for his unfailing advice and support. We are proud to have served alongside you.

**Heartiest Congratulations From
The Advisers, Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Staff of
Singapore Organisation of Seamen, Seacare Co-operative Limited
and its Group of Companies**



SOS & SEACARE SHARE GOOD TIDINGS



"I would like to thank SOS and Seacare for sharing their care and concern for the senior citizens. They have not forgotten the elderly. We are enjoying the fruits of their labour now. It is because of their hard work and effort, we can have a good life now. These elderly are the ones who grew our economy then, and now in their glowing years, it is only right that we take care of them. We appreciate all that they have done."

- Mr Lim Boon Heng, Minister,
Prime Minister's Office



Who's that man?

He's the jolly representation of god of prosperity making his rounds to wish everyone success.



The Suntec City Ballroom was donned in festive red at the auspicious lunar new year celebrations hosted by SOS and Seacare on 27 February 2007.

More than 880 SOS members and their spouse, residents from four Homes, SOS/Seacare business associates and friends ushered in the Lunar New Year together.

Hongbaos of \$100 and \$50 were presented by Guest-of-Honour Mr Lim Boon Heng, Minister in Prime Minister's Office, to each retired seamen and welfare home resident respectively. A hundred elderly residents from the four welfare homes - Ling Kwang Home for Senior Citizens, Sree Narayana Mission Home, Asian Women's Welfare Association & Jamiyah Home for the Aged, and 290 retired seamen benefited from SOS/Seacare's gesture.

Local entertainers Mark Lee and Suhaimi Yusof from Mediacorp Police and Thief sitcom wowed the crowd with their antics.



"We believe that our gesture in giving away the Hong Baos is just as important. Whatever we can spare from our limited resources will help our retired seamen and welfare home residents to celebrate this Lunar New Year in a fitting manner with us."

- Mr Tan Jing Bock,
President of SOS



Celebration made complete with hearty loi hei.



LONG MEMBERSHIP AWARD



These are esteemed members of the union who have not only clocked mileage, but have braved storms with the union. A total of 66 members were honoured and received of the SOS Long Membership Awards. Guest-of-Honour Mr Lim Boon Heng presented the 30-year and 15-year awards respectively to a representative from each category.

Forty-seven recipients were awarded the SOS 30-year Long Membership Award while 19 other members received the SOS 15-year Long Membership Award.

15 YEARS

S/N	M/S NO	NAME			
01	7820	ABD AZIZ BIN TAMBY CHIK	11	8164	MOHAMAD B OSMAN
02	8036	HAMZAH B HJ AHMAD	12	8175	ZAINAL ABIDIN B AHMAT
03	8055	MATSOM B SULIMAN	13	8180	ZARAK B MOHD ALI
04	8064	MOHD ALIAS B JAAFAR	14	8181	MOHD HANIFA B HASAN
05	8152	MOHD TAHIR B PARDI	15	8184	RAHMAT B MD NOOR
06	8154	MOHD SHARIFF B PACKIR MD	16	8186	MUHAMAD HUSNI B HASHIM
07	8155	TAN KING YONG RICHARD	17	8187	AZMAN B EDRIS
08	8157	YONG TEEN TEEK	18	8195	MOHD TAHAR B HUSSAIN
09	8159	AMRAN B MOHD SAAD	19	AL324	GOH SENG HOCK
10	8161	ABD HAMID B MOHD SALLEH			

30 YEARS

S/N	M/S NO	NAME			
01	4097	CHEN SOH HAR	25	AL110	ATAN B SALIM
02	4112	NG TEE TEE	26	AL117	LIM JEW SUAN
03	4128	MASROM B MD ERSAT	27	AL120	CHEW AH KER
04	4156	SALIM B IDRIS	28	AL136	TAN KENG KHIM
05	4171	LEE CHUAN	29	AL137	WONG YAP KEK
06	4186	ALI S/O CHAN KHAN	30	AL141	TAN AH MOY
07	4229	MOHAMED B ARSID	31	AL157	LEE TSU TIMG
08	4245	MOHD B PAKKI	32	AL168	PANG TENG KHIANG
09	4328	SAAD B ABD GHANI	33	AL186	SAGUL AHMIT
10	4332	SAM MIN HONG	34	AL193	TAN PEN G KWANG
11	4346	LING HUENG	35	AL201	SUBUKI BIN SUKI
12	4370	SEE BOON KWANG	36	AL212	TEE CHIN
13	4426	ABU BAKAR B ALI	37	AL234	FOO TOON PENG
14	4516	MOHD AKBAR	38	AL246	ABD RASHID ABDULLAH
15	4558	LAI KOK WAI ANTHONY	39	AL255	SALLEH B DUAN
16	4648	OMAR DRAS	40	AL286	UTTU B ABD RAHMAN
17	4651	AHMAD B JAMARI	41	AL289	SEOW KIAT BIN
18	4695	KHONG YEW KWANG	42	AL291	LOH NGIAP LONG IVEN
19	4721	TAN AH HOW	43	AL299	CHAN TEE HOW
20	4745	YUNOS B YAHYA	44	AL301	MISSION P. BENJAMIN
21	4827	KOBAN SHAIK HUSSAIN	45	AL306	JUMAAT B NENWARI
22	4859	SAMSUDIN B HAMID	46	AL311	SAID B HUSSIN
23	AL040	LIM EE AIK	47	CD07	TSEE YEAR SENG
24	AL091	CHOW HENG JOKE			

GS ENGAGES

"As a union, we see to it that we remain relevant and continue to lend help to our members and do our best to close up the social gap so that no one is left out or left behind."



SOS General Secretary Mr Leow Ching Chuan gave this assurance at the dialogue session with the members.

The union leader shared the buzz with members on the NTUC-led five-year plan – LM 2011. The labour movement has set its sights on bridging the 'Three Divides' and emerging as one common interest by 2011. Young or old, higher-waged or lower-waged, foreign or local, Mr Leow reiterated the necessity of uniting and progressing as one.

Held on 21 March 2007, the dialogue session was a personal and face-to-face affair, where the union chief shared news and updates, and sought feedback from members.

And issues of members' welfare certainly took precedence. With the expiry of the free health screening and/or eye examination looming, SMS Manager Ms Mariana Amad urged members to fully utilise these benefits if they have not.

In a tie-up with Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) and New Optometry & Ocular Care Centre (NOOCC), the Seacare Medical Scheme (SMS) was launched to bring greater gain to union members through free health screening and eye examination. These benefits for the current term of office will expire in end March 2008.

Said Mr Leow, "It's free because you are a paid-up SOS local member, so make the most of it."





SHIP VISITORS FEEL RIGHT AT HOME ON BOARD

It is a familiar sight – Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim going onboard vessels and carriers, paying visits to seafaring members, ensuring that their welfare are taken care of. There were times when Mr Mohamed Idris ‘raced against time’ to pay courtesy calls on multiple vessels, within a stretched timeframe.

Today, Mr Mohamed Idris is no longer the lone ranger. Four other members of SOS – Mr Mohamad Abu Bakar, Mr Daniel Tan, Mr Abdul Rahim Mohamed and Mr Seow Siow Kiat are now qualified to conduct ship visits as well.

Having completed the International Committee on Seafarers’ Welfare (ICSW) Ship Welfare Visitors Course conducted last October at Seacare Building, the five individuals have received their certificates, which authorise them on such visits onboard ships.

The ICSW Ship Welfare Visitors Course was meant to equip participants with formalised training for those entering port areas and involved in ship visiting, in any welfare capacity. In particular, the course takes into consideration the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS Code), health & safety, shipboard protocol, a basic understanding of seafarers’ issues and of the maritime industry.

The faster turnaround of ships with fewer crew groups demanded an increasing need for ship visitors as seafarers would have little time to go ashore. Singapore’s strategic geographical location with vessels

carrying a diverse crew of various nationalities certainly warrant the need for more welfare officers.

Said Mr Mohamed Idris, "There can never be too many welfare officers. We must ensure that we are available to the seafarers whenever they need us, and having sufficient welfare officers will allow the union to better cater to them. We must not compromise their interests."

Far-reaching benefits to the maritime industry aside, the Ship Welfare Visitors Course will certainly bring convenience and seafarers and certified ship visitors alike stand to gain as well.



"There can never be too many welfare officers. We must ensure that we are available to the seafarers whenever they need us, and having sufficient welfare officers will allow the union to better cater to them. We must not compromise their interests."

Said Mr Mohamed Idris

WAGES RECOVERED FOR STRANDED SEAFARERS

Imagine having to work in an environment that is far from adequate - insufficient food and water supply; no medical aid; unsafe working conditions; no wages for months....

Such was the situation the crew members of the Panama-registered ship, Golden Trader 1, had to endure for months. By the time the distress call was made, when the ship was anchored off the eastern anchorage on 29 January 2007, crew members were famished and undernourished, an injured member who sustained a back injury was in need of medical treatment, and all the crew members were anxious about their family members not being supported for months. Apparently, salaries had not been paid to crew members for months.

The process of recovering wages on behalf of the crew was carried out. Three weeks later, the owners of the ship

agreed to pay in full all wages owed to their staff. The wages recovered amounted to a whopping US\$140,000.

There to witness the settlement of the wages was Vice President of SOS, Mr Mohamed Idris Mohamed Ibrahim. As he mingled with crew members and talked to them about their ordeal, they all expressed gratitude for all that was done to rescue them from their plight. Mohamed Idris affirmed SOS's commitment to continue safeguarding the rights and welfare of seafarers.

The entire ordeal left an unpleasant feeling, most of whom left the following day, leaving behind a skeletal crew of deck officers and engineers onboard to man the vessel till the replacement crew arrived.

At least, the seafarers could return home with their wages.

For any enquiries, please contact IR Division at (65) 6379 5660/63

SEAFARERS PROVIDENT FUND

HITS \$10 MIL MARK

Close to 13,000 SOS local and foreign members working onboard 371 vessels now have a combined savings of more than S\$10 million in the Seafarers Provident Fund (SPF). And the Fund is set to keep on growing as more and more shipowners see the full benefit of the scheme that promotes and protects seafarers and their families' well-being.

Set up in 2001, the SPF started with a humble number of 2,330 accounts at S\$0.9 million. Since then, the accounts have increased five times and the fund has ballooned eleven times over.

"The success of the Seafarers Provident Fund Scheme is the result of the strong support of the shipping companies. So far more than 70% of companies under CBA with Singapore Organisation of Seamen are covered under the Scheme. This shows how much the shipowners care for the seafarers who work onboard their vessels," says Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary.

The scheme, the brainchild of SOS, seeks to build a decent nest egg for the seafarers' retirement and rainy days. The account holders will also get to see their savings grow as contributions made to the account attract annual interest payment. It also encourages continuous employment of seafarers.

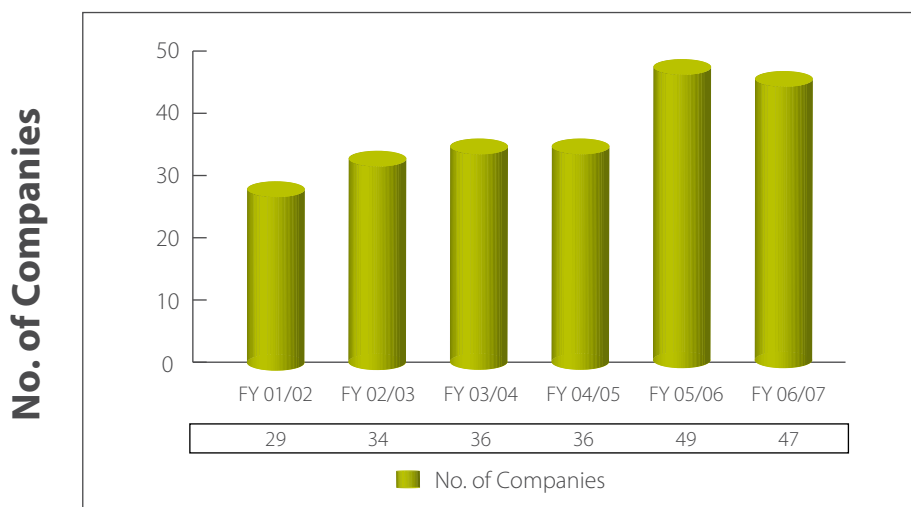
So far, a total of 34 withdrawals worth \$48,000 have been made in FY 06/07. Some of the withdrawals are made by retired seafarers who are 50 years and above and have maintained the account for at least three years. Others are special cases where the monies are released to him and/or his dependents upon the permanent injury or death of the account holder.

Besides the numerous benefits to the seafarers, one of the reasons that the shipowners are saying yes to the SPF is the high trustworthy quotient of organisations managing the Fund. The Fund is administered by Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd and co-managed by NTUC Thrift & Loan Co-operative Ltd. The Administrative Committee (AC) is made up of representatives from the SOS, employers and other organisations of high standing.

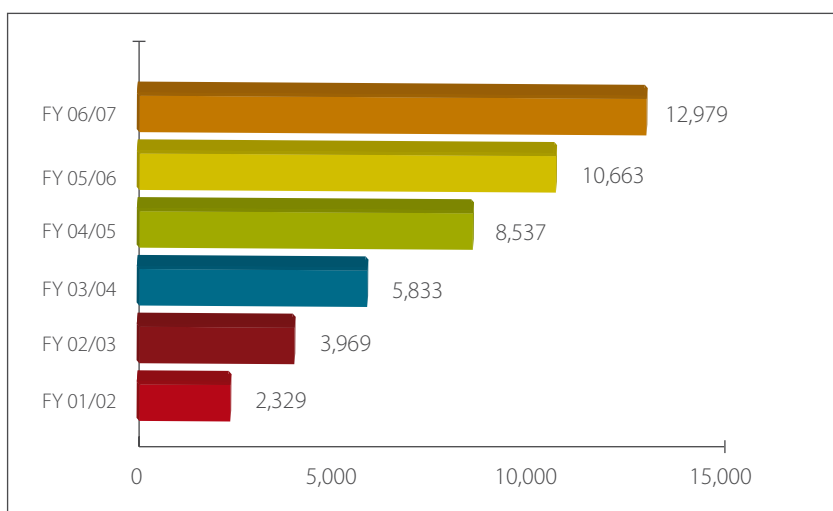
"Shipowners know that the contributions they make to the account holders are well managed," says Mr Leow Ching Chuan, SOS General Secretary.

SPF Report Card For FY 06/07

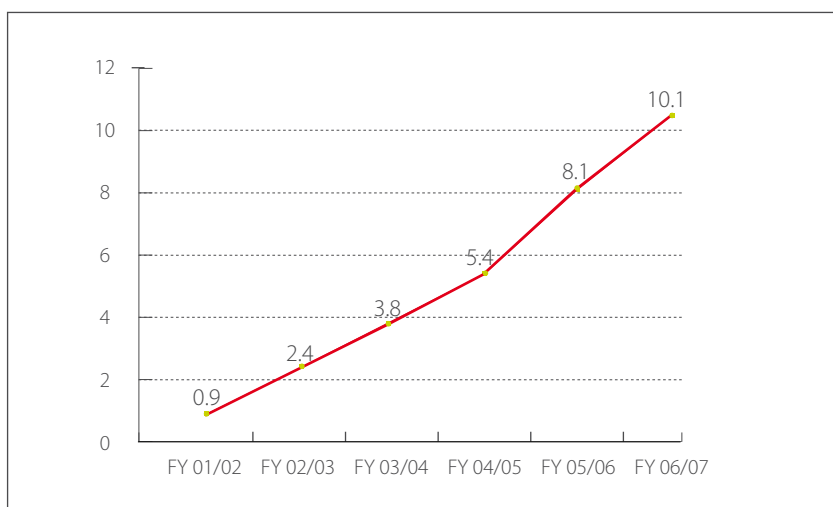
1	No. of Companies	47
2	No. of Vessels	371
3	No. of Thrift A/C Holders	12,979
4	Total Accumulated Funds	S\$10.1M
5	No. of Withdrawals	34
6	Amount Withdrawn	S\$48K



No. of Thrift A/C Holders



Accumulated Funds



Seafarers Provident Fund

How to withdraw?

Under the SOS Seafarers' Provident Fund withdrawal regulation, a member is eligible to withdraw from the scheme if he submits his request on a prescribed withdrawal form (Please download form from <http://www.sosea.org.sg/p-forms.html>) together with the necessary identification papers and must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Age of 50 years old and above, and
2. Maintained the thrift account for a minimum of 3 years.

Any other withdrawal application will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and at the discretion of the Admin. Committee (e.g. permanent injury or death).

For withdrawal purposes, we require certified true copies of documents such as passport, seaman's book, birth certificate, medical report, death certificate or other relevant identifications, whichever applicable.

Contact Info:

52 Chin Swee Road
 #08-00 Seacare Building
 Singapore 169875
 Telephone: 65 6379 5666
 Email: thrift@seacare.com.sg





INTRODUCTION

Building Construction Safety Supervisor (BCSS) Course

Safety is of primary importance to contractors working on construction sites. A supervisor which adopts good safety measures will reap the benefits in several areas. He will reduce the cost of compensation to injured workers. He will lose fewer man-hours and will be able to complete projects on schedule with minimal work stoppage. Safety on site also improves staff morale, improves staff relationships, and enhances the security of families and the community. CITI conducts the BCSS Course to help supervisors maintain good safety practices on sites.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, the participant should be familiar with:-
a) the safety hazards in the construction industry; and
b) the preventive measures for safe work.

WHO

This programme will benefit construction managers, site supervisors, project co-ordinators and clerks-of-works.

COURSE OUTLINE

- Principles of Accident Prevention
- The Workplace Safety and Health Act (WSHA) and The Factories (Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction) Regulations
- Role and Duties of Safety Supervisors
- Safety in Scaffolding
- Safety in Demolition, Excavation and Piling Construction Machinery and Equipment
- Safety in Material Handling
- Safe Use of Lifting Machines, Appliances and Gears
- Safety in Lift Installation
- Site Planning and Layout
- Fire Prevention and Control
- Basic Industrial Hygiene
- General Worksite Safety
- Accident Investigation Techniques

WHAT

Intake: Monthly
Duration: 29 hours (Lessons: 27 hours;
Examination: 2 hours)

WHERE

Construction Industry Training
Institute (CITI), 200 Braddell Road
Singapore 579700

For more information, please contact Training Division at 6379 5671.



"Getting the certificate may be like a formality for some, but honestly, the contents covered in the course are practical and necessary. Not only do we need to move with the times, our knowledge has a limited shelf life as well, and that's why we should stay updated,"

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THE SAFETY WAY

The lines etched on his face may make him stick

out like a sore thumb in a classroom, but Mr Low Huat Chai is not at all perturbed. At 59 years old, the avid learner has challenged himself to take on different courses on various occasions. And each time, he emerged 'unscathed', only to be equipped with new knowledge, new skills.

His latest conquest? The Building Construction Safety Supervisor (BCSS) Course offered by the Construction Industry Training Institution (CITI).

Mr Low considers himself a veteran in the construction industry, having spent nearly eight years working as a Tower Crane Operator and Lifting Supervisor. It is therefore not surprising that he has what it takes to breeze through the course. Some even wonder if it were necessary for him to sign up for the course.

"Getting the certificate may be like a formality for some, but

honestly, the contents covered in the course are practical and necessary. Not only do we need to move with the

times, our knowledge has a limited shelf life as well, and that's why we should stay updated," said the jovial man, who found the course relatively easy and manageable.

And keen as he was, Mr Low faced difficulties securing financial aid for the course from his employer. Fortunately, the day was saved when SOS paid the course fees for the member. His course fees were covered by the Union, under the Training Grant Benefit.

"It is definitely a form of motivation to have the Union cover my course fees. At this age, many of us are approaching retirement and upgrading would probably be the last thing on our minds. But to me, age has never been a barrier. In fact, having gone through these different courses has endowed me with a wider spectrum of proficiency and expertise. So when people asked me, why go for training? I'd say, why not?"



Workfare Income Supplement Scheme

THE LATEST SOCIAL SAFETY PILLAR

With the introduction of the Workfare Income Supplement (WIS) Scheme, older low income workers will be getting more in terms of total take-home pay and total CPF savings for their retirement needs.

The Workfare-Medisave linkage is, in fact, a social safety net for more low-income workers.

The WIS Scheme is a feature to give a leg-up to our low-wage workers to enhance our nation's competitiveness and be better prepared for the future. It is the Government's way of bringing us together to become a more inclusive society.

Introduced to supplement the wages and savings of older low-wage workers, WIS will complement changes in the CPF system, because a reduction in CPF contributions from

CPF changes will be made up for by WIS. This not only means that low-income workers will be better off, employers will similarly enjoy savings from hiring these low-income workers.

This year, the revised WIS is expected to benefit 438,000 Singaporeans. In 2006, some 340,000 workers claimed Workfare Bonus, of which more than 100,000 Singaporeans were without CPF. To truly help low-wage workers, Workfare needed to be linked to CPF, because CPF encompasses a number of social safety nets.

Encouraging more employers and workers to contribute to CPF advocates workers to invest in their own future, a responsibility that should not fall on Government or employers alone.

How WIS Works

1. Employee CPF contributions are reduced to allow higher take-home pay for older, low-wage workers
2. Reduced employer CPF contributions increase employability. Businesses have more financial freedom to hire and stay competitive. On a larger picture, this also makes Singapore more attractive to businesses, retaining and creating jobs.
3. WIS will further complement the CPF changes, topping up and even exceeding any loss in CPF for employees.
4. Take-home pay goes up.

Who Qualifies?

- Singaporean Citizen
- Earns \$1,500 or less a month
- Above 35 years old
- Lives in property of not more than \$10,000 in Annual Value
- Works at least 3 months in any 6-month period in a calendar year, or at least 6 months in the calendar year

“The reason labour movement supports the linkage of Workfare to Medisave, to CPF is because we do not look at Workfare as simply supplementing the income of low-wage workers. We believe there should be a much bigger, much more important objective...Through Workfare, we not only want to encourage workers to look for jobs but also we want workers, in particular, the informal workers – to join the Singapore social safety net.

There’s another important purpose of Workfare, that is, to find ways for workers to grow the total wage pie because if the wage pie is small, no matter how we cut it, it’ll still be small. So the way to solve the low-wage workers’ problem is to find ways to enhance the wage pie. And that can only be done if we can enhance their productivity.”

- Mr Lim Swee Say, NTUC Secretary-General

“But Workfare alone is not sufficient. To remain employable, workers need to be prepared for the long-term needs of the economy through retraining and skills upgrading. Other measures through education and help for low-income families would also help our low-income workers to remain employed.”

- Mdm Halimah Yacob, NTUC Assistant Secretary-General

Eligible For...

- Payout if you earn \$50 up to \$1,500 a month
- Higher payout if you are above 45 years old, up to \$1,200 a year
- Maximum \$900 a year if you are aged 35 to 45
- Employees will get cash; CPF Ratio of 1:2.5
- First Payout in January 2008 if you work at least 3 months in the first 6 months of 2007; payments 2 times a year



COUNTING DOLLARS & SENSE

Come 1 July 2007, Singapore will see a 2% increase in the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The Government will give out \$4 billion over five years in the GST Offset Package to help Singaporeans cope with this increase.

The Package will see many measures being effected, covering the home and school, National Servicemen and Senior Citizens; certainly a timely help to mitigate the 'aftershocks'. So, what's in it for you?

For All Adults

		ANNUAL VALUE OF HOME		
		\$5,000 or less	\$5,001 to \$10,000	More than \$10,000
ANNUAL ASSESSABLE INCOME	\$24,000 or less	\$1,000 (\$250 / yr for 4 years)	\$800 (\$200 / yr for 4 years)	\$400 (\$100 / yr for 4 years)
	\$24,001 to \$100,000			
	More than \$100,000	\$100 (for 1 year)		

GST Credits

– Total \$1.8 Billion over 4 years, to benefit 2.4 million Singaporeans

For the Elderly

		ANNUAL VALUE OF HOME		
		\$5,000 or less	\$5,001 to \$10,000	More than \$10,000
ANNUAL ASSESSABLE INCOME	\$24,000 or less	Age 55-59: \$600 (\$150 / yr for 4 years)	Age 55-59: \$400 (\$100 / yr for 4 years)	Age 55-59: \$200 (\$50 / yr for 4 years)
	\$24,001 to \$100,000	Age 60 & Above: \$1000 (\$250 / yr for 4 years)	Age 60 & Above: \$800 (\$200 / yr for 4 years)	Age 60 & Above: \$400 (\$100 / yr for 4 years)
	More than \$100,000			

*2/3 of the Senior Citizens' Bonus will be paid out in cash and 1/3 into your Medisave Account.

Senior Citizens' Bonus

– Total \$400 million over 4 years, to benefit 544,000 senior citizens

For the Young

Age of Child in Year of Payout	Annual Value of Home \$10,000 or less	Annual Value of Home more than \$10,000
7 to 12	\$200	\$100
13 to 20	\$400	\$200

Post-Secondary Education Accounts

– Total \$400 million over 2 years, to benefit 650,000 school-going children

For Households

OVER 5 YEARS			
HDB Flat Type	U-Save Rebates	S&CC Rebates	Rental Rebates
1 - room	\$1,020	15 months	15 months
2 - room	\$1,020	12 months	-
3 - room	\$840	8 months	-
4 - room	\$790	7 months	-
5 - room	\$500	5 months	-
Exec	\$330	2.5 months	-

Utilities-Save (U-Save), Services & Conservancy Charges (S&CC) and Rental Rebates

– Total \$800 million over 5 years, to benefit 800,000 HDB households

Other Help

Assistance for Low-Income Families with Young Children – Total \$6 million a year
 Public Transport Fund – Total \$10 million over 3 years to help lower-income households
 Assistance for Pensioners – Total \$4 million a year
 Assistance through CCCs, SHGs and VWOs – Total \$5 million a year
 Additional Subsidies for Healthcare, Education and S&CC – Total \$62 million a year
 Property Tax Rebates – Total \$200 million over 2 years, to benefit 1 million property owners

NTUC Pitches In Too

Various NTUC entities have also announced that they will be absorbing the GST hike to provide additional buffer.

Leading the pack is NTUC FairPrice, which has pledged to not only absorb the 2 per cent GST hike for essential items for six months, but also hand out \$1 million worth of vouchers to the needy. It will also adjust prices for some goods gradually over a three-to-six month period. With 201 outlets island-wide, this relief package is set to cost the chain some \$5.5 million.

NTUC FairPrice Chairman Mr Ng Ser Miang said that NTUC will review its help package after six months to see if more needs to be done. He pointed out that absorbing the GST would benefit all Singaporeans; and the vouchers would supplement the Government's \$4 billion offset package and go directly to those who needed them most.

Other NTUC outfits, food outlet operator NTUC Foodfare, NTUC Childcare and training institution, NTUC LearningHub, are also easing the load by absorbing the difference in GST for between six months to a year. This will set them back by \$60,000 to \$500,000.

These measures will cost the labour movement \$6.1 million. "The Workfare and GST offset measures provide adequate relief. But NTUC Co-operatives will still do their part to provide additional cushion to the GST increase, in particular for the lower-income group," NTUC Secretary-General Mr Lim Swee Say explained.



"The Workfare and GST offset measures provide adequate relief. But NTUC Co-operatives will still do their part to provide additional cushion to the GST increase, in particular for the lower-income group,"

NTUC Secretary-General Mr Lim Swee Say

To receive your GST Credits on 1 July 2007, you can now sign up in one of the following ways:

DBS/POSB/UOB/OCBC ATMs	by 25 June 2007
Via website at www.gstoffset.gov.sg	by 25 June 2007
Forms at SingPost, CCs, CDCs and CPF service centres	by 15 June 2007



BUZZ-WORTHY NITE



Bustling with noise and chatter, Club@52 on 24 March 2007 was a scene of celebrations and festivities...except that it was a regular session of the Members' Nite.

Some 131 members' boisterous mood drowned out the stillness of the night surrounding Seacare Building, as they partook in the gourmet spread and mingled about. Be it a

traditional karaoke session or flexing their skills at the pool table, there was something for everyone.

Twenty-five members got lucky and walked away with prizes during the lucky draw segment. It was most certainly a buzz-worthy nite that members would not want to miss for anything!



COMING EVENTS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Family Outing (Overseas)

15-17 June 2007

**SOS/Seacare
Members' Night**

30 June 2007

Seacare Focus





SEACARE SHARES NEW YEAR GOODIES

Who says only the young can bask in merriment? The elderly also know how to have a good time too!

All thanks to Seacare Co-operative, some 116 senior citizens from the Jalan Kukoh RC - Zone C found much joy and laughter over a simple luncheon. Into its sixth year, Seacare has played host to many residents without fail every year, birthing a staunch Lunar New Year tradition at the organisation.

This year, special guest Mr Yeo Guat Kwang, MP for Aljunied GRC, joined these elderly folks at the Seacare Lunar New Year Gathering 2007, participating in a very boisterous 'lo hei'. Everyone tucked into the sumptuous fare of delicacies while enjoying an entertaining line-up of performances and songs. Mr Yeo also presented Hong Bao and distributed goodie bags sponsored by Seacare, to all the senior citizens. They were especially delighted during the lucky draw segment where 20 winners walked away with a \$50 NTUC FairPrice Voucher each.

Chairman of Seacare Co-operative, Mr Leow Ching Chuan, said, "Such celebrations of festivity are the best time to spread joy and cheer to the less privileged. It is about fulfilling social objectives. It is our responsibility to help one another. It is only a small token, but we find it a pleasure to still be able to bring delight to the community."



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said Mr Leow Ching Chuan



SMMC ENHANCES INTERNATIONAL VISIBILITY AT *sea asia*

A new wave of maritime buzz was created at the inaugural Sea Asia conference and exhibition and Seacare Maritime Medical Centre (SMMC) was right in the midst of it.

More than 7,000 participants from 40 nations thronged to the exhibition halls of the Suntec Singapore to attend the highly successful Sea Asia which was held from 2 to 4 April 2007.

Hailed as one of the great international maritime gatherings, Sea Asia exhibition included more than 250 exhibiting companies including SMMC.

"Sea Asia provided an excellent avenue for the team at SMMC to network with the key industry players here and abroad. By participating in the exhibition, we bring the Seacare brand name to the global maritime world," said Dr Chia Yih Woei, SMMC CEO.

"We are excited to see a number of attending ship owners, managers and operators from Singapore and across the region. Many of whom showed interest in our services as a medical centre specialising in maritime healthcare."



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Said SMMC CEO Dr Chia



After his opening address, His Excellency S R Nathan, President of Singapore, toured the exhibition together with an impressive list of government officials as well as prominent individuals in the maritime industry.

The launch of Sea Asia 2007 is set against a strong background of maritime growth in this region. Maritime trade in Asia Pacific is estimated at more than USD \$100 billion, with Asian shipowners and managers accounting for at least 40% of the world's shipping tonnage. In addition, 12 of the top 20 container lines in the world are Asian. Asia also supplies 50% of the world's seafarers. These and other developments have further fueled Singapore's maritime industry and driven forward Singapore's plans to be an International Maritime Centre (IMC). Currently, the maritime industry contributes 7% of Singapore's GDP and is expected to grow rapidly in the coming years.

Mr S S Teo, Chairman, Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), was quoted as saying

that it was timely to have a flagship maritime exhibition and conference to market and profile maritime competency at an international level.

Mr Christopher Hayman, Managing Director, Seatrade, said that the exhibition provided a focus for the "exciting development, demonstrating the breadth and strength of the maritime expertise available here and internationally". With a strong global trend towards clustering in the maritime sector, delegations from maritime centres around the world were in Singapore for the event.

The pan regional event, organised by Seatrade and the SMF, was aimed at highlighting the Asia's voice in world shipping. Over 1,000 delegates attended the three day conference sessions which covered key issues such as the Asian voice in world shipping, ship finance in Asia, the LNG markets, marine insurance and a charterers' forum.

Keynote addresses examined the issues,

both commercial and regulatory that matter most to the Asian maritime community. They were delivered by Mr Sun Jiakang, Managing Director, COSCO Container Lines; Mr Takao Manji, Senior Managing Director, NYK Line and Mr Alberto Aleman Zubieta, Administrator; Autoridad del Canal de Panama.

Another highlight was the 'Sea of Opportunities, Shore of Possibilities' held on 4 April 2007 which was a designated Maritime Youth Day. It was organised by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore with the support of industry partners. The programme featured fun and engaging activities for more than 1,000 students to learn what maritime careers can offer.

SEACARE MANPOWER TAKES **ADVANTAGE!** TO A HIGHER LEVEL

When it comes to helping mature workers stay longer and stay more productive in the job market, Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd goes the whole hog.

Not only does the company employ mature workers, it is offering training courses to equip the greying workers to add value to their employers. And to make skills upgrading even more appealing, Seacare Manpower dangles an irresistible offer – train up and we pay you 100% of your salary over the course of training.

"We are looking to redesign jobs to maximise efficiency and productivity at the workplace. We want to urge workers to sign up for the courses. Seacare Manpower will pay each worker 100% of their basic salary over the course of the training," said Mr Lee Van Chong, Seacare Manpower Managing Director.

The ADVANTAGE! Scheme developed by Work Development Agency (WDA) is one of the driving forces to fulfil the 2007 target of helping 4,000 workers work longer.

The scheme aims to encourage organisations to employ mature and older workers, through flexible funding mechanisms for retraining such workers. To be implemented for two years, it comprises of three components of assistance – Job Redesign Grant, Training Grant and Job Placement Services.

Ms Joanne Cham, Director of NTUC Industrial Relations Department (IRD), said, "Advantage funding is a means to assist

companies who wish to provide areas of job redesign, recruitment of mature workers and employability training for older workers with the objective of enhancing the employment rate of older workers and re-employment of retired workers. We hope that more companies will tap on the fund and make real substantive changes to their HR systems to facilitate the re-employment of these workers."

Seacare Manpower is amongst the 303 companies that are participating in the scheme, aligning its commitment to not only hire these older workers but to play a part in training them too. As one of the largest manpower providers in the industry, Seacare Manpower intends to give a wider dimension to the scope of work through Job Redesigns.

ADVANTAGE! emphasises the value of mature workers that companies can leverage on. Seacare Manpower wants to be at the forefront to enhance their career paths, enhance the job value, and in turn, uplift the professionalism of the occupation.

Seacare Manpower will be conducting five training classes commencing in March 2007, running through to November 2007. Consisting of two to four days of classroom instruction and on-the-job training, skills such as multi-tasking and independence will be emphasised upon.

There are two courses that participants can sign up for: conflict management and embracing and applying change. The former illustrates conflict in a new perspective

– conflict can be rewarding and exciting because with resolution, things can progress to greater heights. The latter introduces Rolf Smith's seven levels of change to participants, where they can learn to apply innovative tools to make change positive and productive.

Ms Joanne Cham also commented, "Seacare Manpower has been actively helping workers seek better jobs in the placement opportunities provided by Seacare. They have been providing training for their workers, enabling them to offer quality services to the businesses they are working in. We understand that most of the workers employed by Seacare Manpower are mature workers and hence, the Advantage funding which is essentially meant to assist companies who have put in effort to recruit, train and retain older workers will be very meaningful and useful for Seacare Manpower.

We are pleased that Seacare Manpower has successfully been granted the Advantage funding. It shows their commitment to further enhance the employability of these older workers. We hope that Seacare will continue to explore new opportunities where we can work together to achieve the same good cause."

The Ministry of Manpower says that there is scope in Singapore to enhance the employment of older residents, adding that this will help meet the challenges arising from an ageing population.

Mr Lee pointed out, "This is a special effort that all organisations should make, so we are always on the look out for opportunities to help vulnerable workers who are prepared to help themselves. ADVANTAGE! is an excellent way through which Seacare Manpower can be a social partner in training these matured workers while giving them a job."



Mr Lim Boon Heng, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office in charge of ageing issues, believes that Singapore should aim higher in its efforts to keep more mature workers in the labour force. His suggestion of a new five-year target is a 65 per cent employment rate for those aged 55 to 64 years.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong summed it up best at the recent Singapore Tripartism Forum about the older workers, "You may move a bit slower but you are less likely to job-hop, you're less likely to do rash things, you're more disciplined, you're more committed to the job...All the employers are here, I hope you will hear the message."

"We are looking to redesign jobs to maximise efficiency and productivity at the workplace. We want to urge workers to sign up for the courses. Seacare Manpower will pay each worker 100% of their basic salary over the course of the training."

said Mr Lee Van Chong, Seacare Manpower Managing Director



Participants of Seacare Manpower Advantage Scheme programme:

HUA YI SEC SCH	KOO PEK KEONG NEE MO HWAY MENG
CHONGFU PRI SCH	TAN CHOO CHING
NORTH VISTA SEC SCH	TAN LYE HENG
STAMFORD PRIMARY SCH	LIM KOK WAH
ST MARGARET'S SEC SCH	CHIA POH SWEE MAGGIE
MOE, REVENUE UNIT HQ	CHUA KIM LEE
HENDERSON SEC SCH	K SHUNMUGAM
RULANG PRI SCH	JAMES REYNOLDS RANASINGHE
RULANG PRI SCH	PANG LONG CHONG
NAVAL BASE SEC SCH	BOK CHEK KOK
CORAL SEC SCH	TAN THIAM HUAT (WILSON),PBM
ST JOSEPH INSTITUTION JUNIOR	LIM JOO GEOK
METHODIST GIRLS' SCH (SEC)	NG GEK CHENG
ST HILDA'S SEC SCH	PHUA MUI KIANG ALICE
ST ANDREW'S JUNIOR COLLEGE	RANI UDAYAKUMAR
ST ANDREW'S JUNIOR COLLEGE	HO YOKE FOONG
ANGLO CHINESE JUNIOR COLLEGE	LEE YOON MENG
HAI SING CATHOLIC SCH	CHIANG SER HWA
SERANGOON GARDEN SEC SCH	HOW CHWEE HAR CYNTHIA
NGEE ANN SEC SCH	RAMNI BTE ISMAIL
WESTWOOD SEC SCH	LAU YIM LING
NORTHBROOKS SEC SCH	ANG HUI MUI (MAY)
EAST SPRING SEC SCH	TEY SOCK ENG (IRENE)
CHIJ OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY	LEE JEE KHIM
NORTH VIEW PRI SCH	TAN LAY CHIN (GRACE)
PEIYING PRI SCH	GOH PENG LIN



VANDA

A PARTNERSHIP WAITING TO BLOOM

It takes two hands to clap and a common vision to bloom. Hua Lan Education Group has the local market knowledge and resources while Sinnet Education Pte Ltd has the experience of implementing bilingual school systems. Both saw an excellent opportunity in creating a vehicle to promote and manage bilingual kindergartens and primary schools in various parts of China using Singapore's education model.

What followed next was a natural progression. Furthering their working relations, Vanda Education Management & Consultancy Pte Ltd was born.

Sinnet Education and Hua Lan Education Investment Pte Ltd had entered a joint venture agreement earlier this year in January. The JV will see Sinnet Education holding a 40% stake while the remaining 60% rests with Hua Lan Education.

"The choice of Hua Lan Education is obvious. As Chairman of Hua Lan, Mr Yin Kuan's business philosophy is in-line with our operational values, and his extensive influence in Tianjin is definitely an asset we can tap on. Moreover, as foreigners, we are not as well-versed in many areas as the locals, so it is important to have a strong partner who knows the ways and regulations of operating in a vast country like China. Similarly, better knowledge of local conditions would mean Sinnet Education has that advantage too," said Mr Goh Yeow Tin, CEO of Sinnet Education.

Complementary working styles aside, both parties were like-minded too in that they recognised the need to leverage on each other's strengths in order to fully exploit the market opportunities.

Under the JV, Mr Yin Kuan will assume the Chairmanship while Ms Chua Lay Mui, General Manager of Sinnet Education, has been appointed the first Chief Executive Officer of Vanda Education. Having worked on several projects in China this last five years, Ms Chua's extensive knowledge and experience of China's educational market is certainly a plus point.

In the earlier days, Sinnet Education and Hua Lan have already assumed a very comfortable working arrangement. Mr Yin Kuan founded a prestigious international kindergarten in Tianjin, occupying 22 villas with a capacity for some 200 boarding children. Sinnet Education was approached to manage its pre-school English programme and providing the necessary training to the teachers.

And when Mr Yin Kuan secured an exclusive license to operate the first Steinway music primary school outside Germany, Sinnet Education was again approached to provide primary school English programme to run alongside the music programme. And the rest, as they say, is history.

On the collaboration with Sinnet Education, Mr Yin Kuan brims with assurance. "I am highly impressed with the professionalism of both Seacare's and Sinnet's managements. In my interaction with Seacare CEO Mr Leow, I find close similarities in our business ideals and market assessment. Having travelled to many countries, I feel that Singapore's model of bilingualism is most appropriate for China in view of our cultural similarities and close ties between the two countries. But above all, I find great confidence and comfort in working with the Seacare team."

For starters, Vanda Education will manage Hua Lan's international kindergarten as well as the Tianjin Music School. The former is already fully operational and in fact, has increased its proportion of international student intake. The latter is targeted for opening in September 2007 and preparations and planning has started for the school's English curriculum and necessary training for teachers.

In the pipeline are plans to establish more schools in Tianjin, as well as an international kindergarten in Beijing. "And once the time is right, we intend to introduce other English enrichment programmes such as phonics, speech & drama, and creative writing classes. Definitely value-adding, but more importantly, these will be beneficial to the little ones," Mr Goh shares.

"The choice of Hua Lan is obvious. As Chairnan of Hua Lan, Mr Yin Kuan's business philosophy is in-line with our operational values, and his extensive influence in Tianjin is definitely an asset we can tap on. Moreover, as foreigners, we are not as well-versed in many areas as the locals, so it is important to have a strong partner who knows the ways and regulations of operating in a vast country like China. Similarly, better knowledge of local conditions would mean Sinnet Education has that advantage too."





SEACARE LANDSCAPE BLOSSOMS INTO FULL-FLEDGE COMPANY

"Such is the standard of service we provide and the level of trust they have in us. Our emphasis has always been to focus on customer service, value-adding our range of services to customise and cater to clients' needs. Cost is a consideration for us, but we will not shave cost and as a result, compromise our quality."

Constructing a monument or landscape that not only lives as a part of the Singapore map, but lives on in the history of Singapore sounds like a bold vision, but the team at Seacare Landscape Pte Ltd is not afraid to dream it.

With an independent and clear identity, Seacare Landscape Pte Ltd is pulling all stops to propel itself towards this ultimate goal.

Seacare Landscape has its humble roots planted as a division under Seacare Environmental, but within a year on, it has now branched out into a full-fledged company under the Seacare Group.

On 1 April 2007, Seacare Landscape Pte Ltd is established. Indeed, even with its humble beginnings, Seacare Landscape has never fail to prove its capabilities, that it is a serious player to contend with. To date, Seacare Landscape has on its platter some nine contractual maintenance jobs and two other ongoing projects, not to mention ad-hoc projects that have been completed. There are also some other ten sites that are currently undergoing discussions. In fact, one client went ahead to renew its contract with Seacare Landscape even before it was due to expire.

One of its competitive edges? Being customer-centric. "Such is the standard of

service we provide and the level of trust they have in us. Our emphasis has always been to focus on customer service, value-adding our range of services to customise and cater to clients' needs. Cost is a consideration for us, but we will not shave cost and as a result, compromise our quality," Mr Firos Angullia, General Manager of Seacare Landscape explained.

Functioning as a company now rather than a division means that they have more resources to play with. Gaining and maintaining the customer's trust is of utmost importance, and thus Mr Firos is adamant about delivering as required and promised, if not more. And he still stands by his 'one-hour' guideline – attending to clients within the hour whenever they need help. He advocates the same directive to his Manager and Supervisor too. And he keeps a close-knitted team to allow effective control, be it in terms of human resource co-ordination or expenses such as lower fixed overheads.

For now, Mr Firos is proud to announce that Seacare Landscape has its own nursery. "Having a nursery will set the pace for our growth. We are working towards a fully-equipped nursery, with a team of highly qualified and specialised team and increasing our fleet of equipment, where we may even propagate all our own plants one day. This is to keep in tandem with the ever-evolving landscape of Singapore," He



continues, "We are still trying to gain a firm footing in this industry, which still has room to manoeuvre. I have every confidence that we are definitely capable of handling any jobs, and once we gain our exposure, Seacare Landscape will become a household name that everyone knows."

Seacare Landscape is set to shine further. It has already embarked upon its potted plants display project, supplying potted plants for display to clients, whether in office or for one-time events like exhibitions. Reed Hycalog Singapore, a logistics and transport engineering firm, has benefited from the efficient and excellent service of Seacare Landscape.

Mr Firos aims to stabilise current operations in all aspects, which will form a solid foundation for future expansion. These design-and-build projects are larger-scale and are about constructing a landscape from scratch, as opposed to maintenance or add-ons.

Said the GM with a keen eye. "Let's just say that while everyone has their eye on the latest hype like the upcoming Integrated Resorts (IR), Seacare Landscape will continue to work on expanding and gaining jobs in other neglected or untapped industries and companies."

He shares his heartfelt appreciation. "I'm very thankful to the Board for seeing the potential in Seacare Landscape, and according to us the invaluable opportunity and support to stand on its own two feet. We are all pleased with Seacare Landscape's performance so far, but I'm sure we will have more to show in time to come."



NEW GM & MANAGER DUO READY TO MAKE A D I F F E R E N C E



It may be April Fool's Day, but it certainly was no April Fool's joke. Mr Firos was appointed General Manager of Seacare Landscape, and Mr Lim Chye Teen joined Seacare Landscape as its Business Development Manager on 1 April 2007.

As its new GM, Mr Firos now has bigger responsibilities to shoulder. In addition to daily tasks, he has to forecast, budget and ensure the smooth functioning of the overall operations. But the man has taken all these in his stride and in fact, looks forward to surmounting the challenges.

"This is more than a job to me now. I'm no rookie, but neither am I a veteran. There are still many things to learn, new knowledge to acquire. I see everyday as a challenge – overcoming challenges and challenging myself," said Mr Firos.

Mr Lim's role is to assist Mr Firos, from formulating and formalising operating procedures to the management of workers and assets. He also needs to heighten the company's sensitivity to the market, elevating its competitiveness through cost effective means of work.



"I see my move to Seacare Landscape as part of my growing process. I have learnt a lot from Mr Firos, because of what he has taught me. There are so much more I can learn from him. In a way, he made me realise that venturing into landscaping is what I want to do."

The young man has aspirations and is glad for the free hand to make decisions generally. He is appreciative that Mr Firos is around to give him guidance and advice.

Of Mr Lim, Mr Firos has this to say. "He is young and driven, definitely a motivated individual who puts in his best effort every time. Seacare Landscape is pleased to welcome him to the team, and with every concerted effort, I am positive Seacare Landscape can scale greater heights."



Imagine, if I had resisted change and rather stay within my comfort zone, I may still be stuck at my very first job or worse, lose my job," said Mr Toh.

The everyday tasks and responsibilities that he has to handle from day to day have undoubtedly increased, but Mr Toh has no qualms taking on these challenges, thanks to the training and preparation that his predecessor, Mr Abdul Kader Bukahari Mohamed Ismail, has given him.

"Mr Kader has taught me a lot since I've become part of Seacare Environmental. I really appreciate his guidance. I'm glad that with him as the Director, we can continue to tap on his experience, which is truly invaluable."

Being part of an increasingly competitive industry, Mr Toh is adamant to see to it that Seacare Environmental maintains its quality of work and service rendered, and sustains its competitive edge.

"Our present contracts remained our priority for sure, so keeping up with our clients' satisfaction is definitely a must. We want to explore how we can value-add further and service them better. At the same time, we will look into how and what we can do to secure more contracts," Said Mr Alan Toh.

NEW GM IS NO NEWBIE

“Change comes in varying forms, whether positive or negative. It’s about moving with the times, adapting to the changes. Imagine, if I had resisted change and rather stay within my comfort zone, I may still be stuck at my very first job or worse, lose my job,”
said Mr Alan Toh

Mr Alan Toh is the new General Manager of Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd, but he is no new kid on the block.

Fifty-nine-year-old Mr Toh has been a SOS member for 36 years, and has spent 27 years working for various Seacare companies, accumulating a wealth of experience in various capacities. The 'Seacare veteran' has so far, spent the last seven years with Seacare Environmental.

And in that familiar fashion, he took on the latest challenge in his stride with the same amount of zest. He was appointed GM of Seacare Environmental with effect from 1 April 2007. Not only does he relish the challenge to serve as its GM, he sees the promotion as an opportunity to acquire new skills, new knowledge.

"Change comes in varying forms, whether positive or negative. It's about moving with the times, adapting to the changes.



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