

October + November 2004

# samudra

**Our vision** is to build up a vibrant organisation of corporate enterprises under a co-operative masthead.

## Seacare New Mission

**Our scope** embraces the seafaring community, the shipping community and general public through their valued and satisfied patronage of our services.

October + November 2004

# samudra

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## contents

### Industrial Relations

- 7 Ship Visits to CSK Beilun and Jurong Balsam
- 10 Compensation for Ythan victims



### Features

- 3 PAP 50th Anniversary Rally
- 5 Annual Tripartite Industrial Relations Seminar
- 6 SMEF and SOS Deepen Relationship
- 10 APRC Meeting
- 14 NTUC Exploration to India
- 15 In person with Dr Vivian Balakrishnan
- 15 NTUC Learning Hub



### Welfare and Social Activities



- 9 Interview with New IR Executive
- 16 Study Grant Presentation
- 18 Family Day-cum-Children's Day
- 19 Deepavali Celebration
- 20 Hari Raya Celebration
- 21 NTUC Chalet
- 22 Members' Corner/Coming Events

### Training

- 12 OTC Institute Graduation Ceremony
- 13 Training

### Seacare

- 24 Interview with Mr Lim Boon Heng
- 26 Seacare Workshop
- 29 Seacare's New Mission
- 30 Seacare Education discusses China
- 31 CSE Calls On Seacare Education
- 32 SNCF's Seminar on Corporate Governance
- 33 ICA Meetings in Thailand
- 34 SNCF Business Talk





# A Shining Excellent Red Dot in Singapore



Singapore may be a small island, but we can be a great nation; a nation at peace with our neighbours, prospering together with Asia, forming a Singapore community stretching beyond our shores.

We may be a small country but we demand excellence in everything we do - it has to be special...Then we will have a shining excellent red dot in Singapore.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong made this call at the People's Action Party 50th Anniversary Rally which was held at the Singapore Indoor Stadium on 5 December 2004.

Singapore, the new Party Secretary-General said, should be "a land of opportunity, where everyone has full and equal opportunities to be educated to the limits of his ability, to realise his full potential, and look forward to a better life for themselves or himself, herself, his/her family".

"It will be a country where everyone is treated fairly, regardless of race, language or religion; an economy where rewards depend on your ability and your effort; and for those people with drive, imagination, ability to create something new, with some talent, the sky is the limit.

It should also be the community where every citizen has a place and a role, whatever his contribution, "where we care for one another, in our families, in neighbourhoods, at work, where successful Singaporeans feel an obligation to the society which

nurtured them, and want to contribute something back to society, where we build a safe home to live, study and work in, and to bring up our families, where we are one big family together."

While spelling out his vision for Singapore and calling on Singaporeans to do their part to shape the nation's future together, Mr Lee pointed out that the less successful among us must be taken care.

"...not everyone can cope with changes, but we will ensure that everyone will run equally fast, but no one should be left out of the race, because all of us have contributed to the success of nation and we all have a stake in the country - so we're all at the same starting point and a fair one."

He added that Singapore too must be modest about our achievements. "We're just 600 square kilometres - we are not teaching anybody anything, but the formula has worked for us, we are not preaching to anybody; let's be modest but let's be confident about our future - we know what we want to do, and whatever happens, we will prevail and win together."



As the party celebrates its 50 years of achievements, the Prime Minister emphasized on the close symbiotic relationship between the PAP and the NTUC, highlighting NTUC Secretary-General Lim Boon Heng's new appointment as PAP chairman.

He said: "The Government champions workers' welfare, focuses on job creation, and has established a tripartite relationship of government, employers and workers who work together harmoniously to bring growth and prosperity to Singaporeans."



Singapore today is on the threshold of a new era - we are at the centre of a region which is undergoing a historic transformation. We have the resources, we have the organisations, we have the skills to prosper with our neighbours.

And the opportunities are all around us - in Singapore, the region and in Southeast Asia. We should seize them, ride the growth in the region, remake Singapore, and bring it to a new level of prosperity which we cannot imagine today.



# Don't take Tripartism for Granted



One key challenge of the tripartite partners in Singapore was to find new ways of working together to enable the economy, industry and businesses to discover new opportunities in new areas and new places.

The country is well positioned to do this, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General Mr Lim Swee Say pointed out at the annual Tripartite Industrial Relations Seminar which was attended by more than 350 representatives of unions, employers and the Government.

Our challenge is to create the environment for our people and businesses to come up with useful innovation quickly, so that Singapore will always run fast.

In his speech, Mr Lim called on the tripartite partners not to take tripartism here for granted.

Tripartism has brought us from third world to the first. The contribution of the tripartite partners should not be taken for granted, he stressed.

While Singapore's economy has been growing from 8 to 10 per cent over the past 25 years, he noted that it will slow down to a more sustainable level of 4 to 6 per cent in the medium term.

This structural trend will put the strength of tripartism - as well as that of the country to greater test. "Sustaining growth at 4 to 6 per cent will still not be easy for Singapore. It depends on how fast we can run in order to stay ahead of the competition," he said.



Mr Lim also called on the tripartite partners not to forget social responsibility.

While Singapore was always looking to be more competitive, Mr Lim reminded participants that the tripartite partners had to look beyond economic growth.

"If we pursue economic objective as our singular objective, at the end of the day, whatever short-term gain we are able to gain as tripartite partners, is not worth the long-term pain," he said.

This long-term pain, added Mr Lim, would manifest itself in the forms of social segregation, tension and eventual instability.

# SMEF and SOS Deepen Relationship



The Singapore Maritime Employers' Federation (SMEF) and SOS leaders and staff took time off to deepen their working relationship and understanding of each other at the Industrial Relations Meeting held on 4 December 2004 in Guilin, China.

The five-member SMEF delegation, led by Chairman Capt Chong Chee Eng, together with the five-member SOS team, led by Mr Kam Soon Huat, SOS Executive Secretary & Chairman of IR, took the opportunity to discuss issues close to their hearts and minds ie the trends and challenges of the shipping industry and its impact on industrial relations.

The ITF Approved SMOU/SOS TCC agreement, IBF agreement, Singapore flag ships and Union's policies were featured.

There was also an exchange of views on the Seacare Medical Scheme to be introduced in 2005.

The SMEF and SOS also deliberated on ways where Singapore can maintain its competitive edge so that the maritime industry can continue to flourish and be vibrant.



# Touching Base OnBoard



In his inaugural ship visit, Mr Daniel Tan, SOS new IR Executive found himself in awe amidst a whole new world of seafaring.

When the bulk carrier CSK Beilun - TCC (Tai Chong Cheang Steamship) anchored off the Eastern part of Singapore, Mr Tan had a rare glimpse of the bulk carrier as his fellow IR Executive, Mr Michael Tham and himself approached the vessel on a bumboat from Clifford Pier. On that sunny day of 21 October 2004, our IR Executives were warmly welcomed by the Captain and his crew members as they balanced up the gangway. Following a good time of touching base over a hearty lunch, souvenirs of caps and towels were presented.

Mr Tham and Mr Tan were later shown around the ship. From their casual chats with the crew members and the walk-about along the bow to the stern, through the crew quarters, mess area, observation deck and engine room, some things were consistent - the camaraderie among the crew members were strong and the ship condition was in good order. The hospitality offered by TCC made Mr Tan's first ship visit a very enjoyable and unforgettable experience.



On another occasion, Mr Tham and Mr Tan paid a visit to MV Jurong Balsam on 2 November 2004, which docked at K21 Keppel Terminal. Here in Singapore on its regular visit from India, the ship's stores were waiting to be replenished with food and other necessities.



During their visit, our IR Executives took the opportunity to touch base with the Master, Officers and crew members. They enquired on their welfare and working conditions on board and were pleased to hear that there were no complaints. The crew members were satisfied with the company's concerns over their welfare and the working relationships on board were good.

Mr Tham and Mr Tan presented SOS mementos to the appreciative seafarers before leaving the vessel.

The union's Ship Visiting Programme, conducted regularly for the purpose of ensuring that proper working conditions and welfare of seamen are taken care of has certainly been well received by both seamen as well as ship owners and agents.



# Hello Daniel!

Mr Daniel Tan is our new Industrial Relations Executive, having joined SOS big family from October 2004. Samudra speaks to him about his job, and find out how he is coping.



## **What were you doing before you join SOS?**

I spent three years with a real estate developer, in charge of sales and marketing. I was responsible for new project launches, and although I had to deal with sales figures and marketing strategies, it was pretty much a team effort. Prior to that, I was doing property management, doing marketing as well.

## **Why the switch?**

I felt the need to widen my scope of knowledge and exposure. I needed a change of environment and I'm ready for the challenge!

## **How are you adapting and coping?**

I may not have the relevant experience and knowledge, but I can offer other equally important skills like

interpersonal communication and negotiation skills. This is a whole new ball game. And that's exactly what I set out to achieve...to learn and do something new!

## **Tell us how the past two months have been for you.**

Amongst many things, I get to go on ship visits, which is one major difference between my previous job and this. I find it more hands-on and interesting. I get to see for myself the possible problems and hardships the seamen face. It is certainly not the safe and cushy job that many of us envision. This has opened up a brand new world that I have never been exposed to before. The spectrum in shipping and in unions is really wide, but I'm really in awe of the fact that the Union's entire existence is based on the concern for members' welfare.

## **Tell us more about your first ship visit.**

It was a very valuable experience for me. I was on board the ship CSK Beilun and the visit gave me a better insight of a seafarer's life on board. I never imagined them having to sail for many months without being with their family members, and not to mention without being able to go on shore! It was there and then that I realised being a seamen is not an easy vocation.

I was really impressed that all the crew were all working in harmony, like one big family. I understand they have been working for the company for many years and the company must have been treating them well and just.

## **What gets you really up and going on the job?**

I must say that the environment that I work in is warm and everyone is ever so helpful. All my colleagues have been really helpful and have paved a smoother learning journey for me. I'm not afraid to ask, and I know I can count on them for sound advice.

I am really appreciative of the support and help that the organisation has been showering on me. SOS gave me a chance despite the fact that I may not have the relevant experience. I am looking forward to growing with the organisation.



# SLF Fund Compensat



*Mr Bon presenting a cheque to Dao Cho, wife of victim U Kyaw Win.*



*Daw Khin May Win, wife of victim Than Oo, receiving cheque from Mr Bon.*





# ion to Victims of Ythan

On 28 February 2004, the cargo ship Ythan exploded and sank in the Caribbean Sea off Colombia while transporting iron bars from Venezuela to China via the Panama Canal. There were six casualties while three suffered injuries during the tragedy. The 21 survivors floated at sea for 10 hours before being rescued by two container ships.



The families of the victims received some US\$ 2.1 million in compensation payout in August, under an arrangement between the ship's insurer, the P and I Club, and the Singapore-based Eastwind Ship Management Company.

On 30 October 2004, SOS Vice-President Mr Bon Sheun Ping, went to Myanmar to personally oversee the compensation payout of the SLF Gift Plus to the families of the victims on board Ythan. A sum of SGD \$4,500 each was presented to the families of the deceased members. He noted that most of the crew members had served the company for a long time and conveyed his condolences about the unfortunate accident to the families.



*Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, Minister for Environment and Water Resources presenting the scroll to Mr Richard Seow.*

# Graduating With Flying Colours

"The mindset of employment for life has to go", said Minister for Environment and Water Resources, Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, at the Ong Teng Cheong Institute of Labour Studies Graduation Ceremony 2004. Reiterating Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's call for every worker to take responsibility for his own learning, he said: "Every worker should be prepared to regularly self-audit his skills, knowledge and relevance to the job market. A learning mindset and a willingness to invest and improve oneself will be an indispensable tool for survival in the economy."

That was the attitude of SOS member, Mr Richard Seow. Age certainly posed no barrier for Mr Seow who is one of the proud graduates who received the Advanced Certificate in Industrial Relations (ACIR) at the graduation ceremony held at Orchid Country Club. He is currently doing his Diploma in Employment Relations.

Mr Seow was apprehensive at first. "I was really worried that I couldn't cope or understand the lessons, but now I'm really glad that I did not hesitate to go for the course. It certainly feels wonderful to have achieved what I thought was difficult in the first place. It's all part of skills redevelopment and its important that we consistently upgrade ourselves."

"All the hard work has paid off, and I hope to make full use of the knowledge I acquired from these courses. I want to move on to bigger things eventually!" Mr Seow envisioned, beaming with pride.

On 6 November 2004, Mr Seow together with more than 109 graduands received their certificates and diplomas from the OTC Institute of Labour Studies - with 59 of them receiving their Diploma in Employment Relations, while the rest received Advanced Certificates in Industrial Relations. Both courses were subsidised

by the Skills Development Fund and the Ong Teng Cheong Education Trust Fund.

Dr Yaacob Ibrahim, the Guest-of-Honour for the graduation ceremony, stressed the need for a lifelong learning culture for workers, to understand that employability for life as the more practical and feasible option in the volatile economy of today. "This means being prepared for discontinuous employment and acquiring necessary know-how to get the next job,"



he said. A culture of lifelong learning must be built, he added, so that workers stay relevant to the needs of the job market. This, he noted, will help improve the quality of Singapore's workforce, and reduce structural unemployment, which has become more evident in recent years.

The OTC Institute of Labour Studies, whose Chairman is Minister of Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, offers a variety of courses in labour management and industrial relations. Since the inception of the Diploma in Employment Relations and Advanced Certificate in Industrial Relations in the early 90s, more than 1,100 people have graduated from the two courses.





# Training for A Rainy Day

Bitterness first, and sweetness will follow. These are the words of 32-year-old Mr Abdul Aziz Mohamad, a despatch clerk with a precision tools company. A seaman before switching to a shore job, Mr Abdul Aziz has no qualms signing up for more courses and constantly upgrading himself.

From PC troubleshooting courses, shipping courses to Class Two, Three and Four licenses under his belt, Mr Abdul Aziz has taken them all. For a man who only requires a motorcycle license for his job, he is indeed willing to go the extra mile and put in effort to upgrade himself. "Not needing it now does not mean I would not have any use for it in future. I am not going to restrict myself to the type of courses or enrichment to go for. Every course is a skill in itself. I wouldn't want to wait till I'm retrenched before I upgrade myself!"

Mr Abdul Aziz is a fine example of someone whose thirst for knowledge has indeed paid off. "With the skills I learnt, my company appreciates me more and I am assigned work that is not just restricted to being a despatch clerk. In addition, I am also able to take on freelance jobs to supplement my income...without affecting my day job's performance of course!" he added with a laugh.

It's a personal fulfilment. Every course offered by SOS is a golden opportunity for me. The courses are comprehensive and we have a wide variety to choose from. There is something for everyone, and attending the courses do not take up much time. It's all a matter of time management. So why not?

The doting father of three counted on the support of his family and sang praises of SOS's efforts in lending a helping hand to all members. "I have friends who are not members of the union, and they took the same courses as I did. The difference? I do not have to fork out a single cent for these courses that I attend, but they have to! They don't even have subsidies to help them."

He sounded an advice to his peers: "You have the ability, now the opportunity is presented to you, idle no more. Enrich yourself and your life by upgrading yourself. This is the opportunity to make yourself marketable!"

Mr Abdul Aziz is currently taking his Class Five license. Ask him what he intends to sign up for next, and he will tell you proudly and without any hesitation, "I think I want to learn how to manoeuvre and work a crane!"





Seeing is believing. And that is exactly what 54 union leaders from NTUC affiliated unions did in the learning exploration to Chennai & Bangalore, India. From 17 to 21 October 2004, the leaders saw and believed the competitiveness of India. SOS Treasurer Mr Lee Van Chong was one of the leaders who had an eye-opening experience.



# An Eye-Opening Passage to India

Congress (INTUC), Tamil Nadu Branch and Southern Railway Mazdoor Union (SRMU). INTUC surprised the visitors with their harmonious labour-management relationships. Both union and management representatives sang praises of each other during their presentations. In addition, INTUC understood that for their members to reap the maximum benefits, the



For many of the unionists, it was their first visit to Chennai and Bangalore and the trip provided a unique opportunity to go "behind the scene" to learn and understand the culture and practices of India as well as the key threats and opportunities arising from the developments in the country, Mr Lee said.

One of the lessons learnt was that the management, especially middle management, is largely accountable for the productivity and quality of work in the companies the Singapore delegation visited. Thus, one of the recommendations is that the Singapore management be invited to participate for future learning exploration together with their union counterparts. "They should also feel, understand and appreciate the threats and challenges posed by India," one leader was quoted as saying.

The key highlights of the visits include discussions with union leaders from the Indian National Trade Union

companies they are working in must be profitable and they, as workers, have a part to play in revenue generating. Similar to NTUC, INTUC seemed to believe in the 'win-win' model too.

Other highlights included factory visits cum briefing by management representatives at Sundram Fasteners, Brakes India Limited, Lucas-TVS Limited and Symrise Private Limited in Chennai, Information Technology Park Limited, Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys Technologies Limited in Bangalore.

At Tata Consultancy Services, union leaders learnt that half of the company's workforce is MBA or PhD holders. However their starting salaries (Rs 25,000/month) are not as high as degree holders working in Singapore. The point is - India is not only a source of cheaper labour, but one of a higher calibre.

The Singapore delegation also met up with the officials from the Consulate of the Republic of Singapore, Contact Singapore, International Enterprise Singapore and Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore.



SOS and Seacare representatives Jacquelyn Lam, David Shoo, Gillan Teo, Mariana Angel and Daniel Tan have one thing in common - they are all below 35 years old and all attended the NTUC Young Unionists' Interaction Series.

This time round, the conversations were held at the Union Square at The Amara on 24 November 2004 with Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports.

For the young unionists, it was a good opportunity to come up close to a political leader to exchange views on the changing needs and aspirations of the young Singaporeans as well as issues affecting Singapore and the region.

Ms Teo told Samudra: "All young Singaporeans are invited by the Government to play a part in shaping the country by getting involved, so that we can feel that we have ownership in Singapore.

# Let's Talk!

The session with Dr Balakrishnan enabled the "Young and Restless" (as the young unionists are termed) to get an enlightened insight on many wide ranging issues and policies that we initially did not understand. The dialogue has indeed reinforced my own personal slogan: Proud to be a Singaporean!"

The frank discussion and ventilation was described by Mr Tan as fruitful and enlightening. "I appreciate the government's conscientious efforts in making Singapore a better place to live in more after the dialogue," he commented.

For Mr Shoo, the chance to speak out was what he appreciated the most. "The exposure and experience of conversing with the minister in itself is eye-opening," he said.

Organised by the NTUC Youth Committee, the NTUC Young Unionists' Interaction Series was kicked off in August 2004 with a dialogue with Mr Lim Swee Say, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General.

## From NTUC Computer Training to NTUC Learning Hub Pte Ltd



**NTUC Computer Training Centre, which was established in 1982, is now known as NTUC Learning Hub Pte Ltd.**

**Launched on 1 November 2004, the NTUC Learning Hub is situated in Tanjong Pagar and Buona Vista. It has a total of more than 30 rooms well-equipped with more than 600 state-of-the-art PCs to cater to the learning needs of students. Individuals and organizations can sign up for 60 different IT courses comprising of 3 tiers, from basic to intermediate and advanced levels. The programmes include desktop applications and multimedia design, to system administration and networking applications.**

### **3-in-1 Powerful Combination of Skills Needed**

The best way forward to look after the interest of our workers is to equip them with the hard skills to be

productive, soft skills to be adaptable, and customer-centric skills to be competitive.

"This combination of hard, soft and customer-centric skills is a powerful combination," Mr Lim Swee Say, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General, said this at the official launch of the NTUC Learning Hub on 1 November 2004 at the NTUC Centre.

Together, as tripartite partners, I am confident that we can succeed in sustaining the growth of the Singapore Economy; the profitability of Singapore-based companies; and the social progress of our Singaporean workers in this fast changing world, for a long time to come.



# SOS Places Right Focus on Education



For 26 years, SOS has been giving out bursaries and scholarships. The Study Grant Presentation still remains one of the most significant events in the union's yearly social calendar. This year, the Union presented \$42,300 to 170 students, all of whom are children of SOS members. Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd had sponsored the Special Incentive Award in the form of Book vouchers.

"I am sure that if they were to form alumni, they will have several hundred members from among the students who have benefited from their bursaries and scholarships," Mdm Halimah Yacob, NTUC Deputy Secretary-General, said at the SOS Study Grant Presentation held on 2 October 2004 at the NTUC Centre. "SOS's contribution to the welfare and well being of its members is truly laudable."

By giving out these bursaries and scholarships, Mdm Halimah pointed out that SOS has placed the right focus on education. Touching on the importance of education, she said that with a good education, new skills and requirements can be absorbed much more easily. Education also should help in developing character and responsible citizenship.

"For education is not an end in itself but is a means to an end - ultimately to help us become better people and good citizens with a strong sense of duty to others."



## Mdm Halimah's Story

Mdm Halimah's speech made at the SOS Study Grant Presentation had glimpses of how life was like when she was a student, struggling to pay her school fees and textbooks "I am always very happy when I am asked to present bursaries and scholarships, because I know how much it means to parents and their children," she said. The parents and students listened with rapt attention as the NTUC Deputy Secretary-General shared her story.

I really wish that when I was growing up there were such schemes to help needy students and incentivise the good ones. In those days, we really had to struggle to continue to remain in school. Everyday was a big battle. I remember that I was always the last student in the class to pay my school fees. It was not something very pleasant as the whole class knows that I could not pay my fees on time. But I had to wait for my brother to get his pay in the second week of the month and then pay my school fees. Many other things take priority over paying school fees.

... and I had to suffer scolding from my teachers because I had to share books with other students...

"In those days, also, there was a big market for second hand school books. I used to get my books from the well-known second hand school book shops at Bras Basah Road. Sometimes, there was no stock and I had to suffer scolding from my teachers because I had to share books with other students, which can be humiliating. Today, many organizations, including NTUC FairPrice, our own co-operative, distribute free second hand books every year. So there is less pressure on parents who want to educate their children regardless of their circumstances."



I have been receiving the award almost every year since primary 2. I'm astounded to hear about Mdm Halimah's past struggles. What she is today has a lot to do with her past. What makes our future depends on now.  
- **Yan Wen Tao, 15**



Mdm Halimah's story is very touching and it inspired me. I was shocked to hear about her background. She really made it and her brother's sacrifice is great. As for the study grant, I will be using it to buy books and pay for the school fees. I hope to get it again next year.  
- **Mohd Faizal, 19**



I am happy with her results. The study grant is for her education. It's hers and she'll decide what she wants to do with it. We want to thank the Union for it.  
- **Hamzah Paradi, father of 7 year old Nur Dayana**





# Adults and Children Get Wet and Wild @ Wild Wild Wet

In a joint celebration of Family Day and Children's Day, SOS found no better way than to get them all wet and wild at the Wild Wild Wet in NTUC's Downtown East. On the hot Sunday of 3 October 2004, 245 SOS staff, members and their families decided to escape from the sweltering heat for a time of exhilarating fun in the water. Singapore's newest and biggest water theme park which only opened its doors 6 months ago offers some of the most exciting water park rides found nowhere else in Asia!



There was Ular-lah, the first in South East Asia, which seemed to be the 'wet' favourite. Shaped like a giant human-eating snake, the 10-metre high ride allowed a six-person raft to course through the waters as they collided head on with exciting turns, bumps and dips much like a real life white-water rafting experience.

- In the Sidewinder, sports enthusiasts experienced gravity-defying odds being flung up and down and side to side in a two-seater tube.
- Everyone had a refreshing good time along the five different slides at the three-storied Professor's Playground.
- There was also the Tsunami which simulated varying strengths of waves like those in the open sea including the turbulent tidal waves of a real Tsunami.
- Some of the members chose to just take a dip and relax along Shioh River, the longest river ride in Asia, while the younger ones raced along rapids on inflatable rafts under waterfalls, through caves and into quiet calm waters.

The well-rewarding Family Day cum Children's Day included a 'fun-key' worth \$10 which was given to everyone at the entrance and a Lucky Dip that saw members walking away with the top 30 prizes and many other attractive prizes.

The amazing water adventures at Wild Wild Wet appealed to the young. Even the adults took the plunge and found themselves thirsting for more. One could hear them say, "May there be many more wet and wild days to come!"





## Deepavali Celebration - All Spiced Up



**A week after Deepavali, SOS treated their staff and members with their own party at the Roshni Fine Indian Dining & Lounge. The party on Friday 19 November 2004 saw a full-house of 150 attendees who knew how to light up the occasion.**

A dinner buffet of North Indian cuisine spiced up and energized everyone for the programmes that followed. As the night drew on, so did the tempo of things as feet started tapping to the groove of popular Indian songs. Just watching the dancers move to the groove was enough to usher anyone to the dance floor whether they knew how to dance or not.

When the mood was up, almost everyone was game for anything. The singing and laughter rang through the rest of the night as union members let their hair down in a cross-dressing game and many other lively games. No one was missed out as door gifts and attractive prizes of electrical goods and household appliances from the Lucky Draw awaited everyone.

The joyful vivacity with bright lights and even brighter smiles really brought the house down! And so, they 'bhangra'ed all the way into the night.







# Seeing Stars @ Hari Raya

To many of the Malay members of SOS, this year's Hari Raya Celebration at the Restoran Tepak Sireh is not one they could afford to miss. With Special Guest Mr Arthur Fong, MP for West Coast GRC & SOS Advisor, Mr Zulkifli Mohammed, SOS Advisor and a celebrity cast of Uji Rashid and Hail Amir from Malaysia, who could resist the temptation to rub shoulders with the special guests and even have snapshots taken with them?

And so when the time came for the SOS Hari Raya Celebration, on Friday 26 November 2004, some 300 SOS staff, members and their families turned up, all decked out in their best attire, at the restaurant which is housed in a historical monument built more than 150 years ago. With the best rendang that melts in your mouth and authentic recipes that come from generations of chefs, members relished every dish that was served to them.

The sumptuous dinner soon led to games that appealed to both children and adults. Some men saw the need to endear to their more feminine nature by competing among themselves for the best 'dressed' man, while the children were not shy to participate in every challenge.

Performances from local artistes and special guest appearances from two Malaysian stars only revved up the crowd's excitement.

The door gifts and attractive prizes from the Lucky Draw were also a highlight for the members. With so many wonderful surprises, its no wonder that by the time the celebration ended, everyone was seeing stars!



# Sun, Sand, Resort!



Sixteen thrilling rides? Splashing good fun? Twenty-eight lanes of Bowling? Hitting the Jackpot? And you want more?

Discover Downtown East, Singapore's most exciting leisure destination and make a getaway at our Resort. With non-stop fun, games and entertainment, find out why Costa Sands Resort (Downtown East) is Singapore's leading choice for great holidays.

Attracting an annual visitorship of 2.5 million visitors, Costa Sands Resort (Downtown East) is the popular choice holiday destination for Singaporeans. The latest addition, an elevated five-lane 50 metre swimming pool and children's pool, a first in Singapore with its side and bottom see-

through panels, allow resort guests to wave to their family members when having fun swimming.

And now, **attention all SOS members!** Singapore's most exciting leisure destination with non-stop fun, games and entertainment will be drawing nearer to your doorstep! **SOS members can now enjoy preferential rates when they make chalet bookings through the union.** All the chalet are fully air-conditioned with bathrooms and temperature-controlled showers.



## Rules & Regulations on booking of Downtown East Chalet Resort

1. Booking of chalets is open to paid-up members only and limited to two off-peak and one peak period for every quarter\*.
2. Booking is open exactly three months in advance from the date of check-in.
3. Booking has to be made personally by the member at the SOS office, between Monday to Friday, from 9am to 5pm. Any other person will need to produce a letter of authorisation signed by the member or the member's SOS membership card together with the bearer's identification card.
4. Due to limited number of chalets, reservation or phone booking is not allowed.
5. No cancellation or refund is allowed within two weeks from date of check-in.
6. No refund will be given for any period not utilised.
7. A change to check-in date is subject to chalet availability.
8. The Union shall not be held responsible for any injury or accident sustained by the occupants during their stay at the chalet.
9. The Union shall not be held responsible for the loss of any valuables, money or personal effects of the chalet occupants and guests.
10. The Union reserves the right to cancel, change or reject any booking at any time.

## Rental Charges exclusively for SOS members

- \*Off-peak period : S\$ 60 (additional \$ 5 per day for public or school holidays)  
: Mondays to Wednesdays (two nights)  
: Wednesdays to Fridays (two nights)
- \*Peak Period : S\$ 120  
: Fridays to Mondays (three nights)
- \*Quarter : Jan to Mar or Apr to Jun or Jul to Sept or Oct to Dec

## Booking of BBQ pit

Members may request for reservation of BBQ pits while placing reservation for the chalets at the SOS office. However, please note that allocation of BBQ pits is at the sole discretion of Resort Downtown East. Once confirmed, payment has to be made at the Resort counter upon check-in.

## Charges per BBQ pit

- Per day : \$ 10 – public  
\$ 6 – NTUC Union Members

## Contact Details

SOS Welfare Division : 6734 5525 (Fax)  
Mr Tan Jing Bock : 6379 5670 (Tel)  
Ms Mariana Angel : 6379 5671 (Tel)

*\*Please note that Resort Downtown East's Rules and Regulations apply.*



# Have you received your NTUC Card?

From 1 December 2004, the NTUC Card officially replaced the current NTUC LinkCard and all union members should have received their cards between mid-August to November. If you have not received your card, you may:

- a) Contact your Union
- b) Contact NTUC Call Centre at 6213 8008
- c) Walk in to NTUC Customer Service Centre

LinkPoints will automatically be transferred from members' existing Gold LinkCard to your new NTUC Card.

For more information, you can approach the above-mentioned means, or visit [www.ntuc.org.sg](http://www.ntuc.org.sg).



## Coming Events

### A Brand New Start To A Brand New Year!



16 February 2005  
**Lunar New Year Celebration  
and Hong Bao Presentation**

## Members' Corner



### *Wedding Bells Ring!*

*Wishing our two happily married members,  
everlasting marital bliss! They are...*

Mr and Mrs Mohd Junied Mohd Salleh,  
who were married on 4 September 2004;

and

Mr and Mrs Mohd Ibrahim Maideen Ibrahim  
who were married on 30 October 2004.



### *Bundle of Joy*

Welcoming the birth of a baby boy to Mr and Mrs  
Abdul Aziz Mohamad on 15 October 2004!

and the birth of a baby girl to Mr and Mrs  
Mohamad Pakki on 23 Nov 2004!



# Seacare Focus



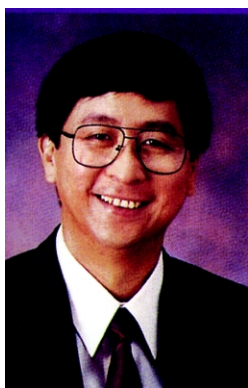


Seacare marked a milestone when it turned 10 this year. As part of the Co-operative's efforts to reinvent, review and stay relevant in the business and co-operative movement, Seacare sought the assessment of NTUC Secretary-General Mr Lim Boon Heng before the Board of Directors and Management staff's deliberation at the Seacare Workshop. Mr Lim was also asked to comment on the then proposed Seacare Mission.

in industry. The conventional way is to resist change and employers to tell the government that every effort must be taken to protect jobs. SOS, on the other hand, took the view that so long as we ensure that the worker has a job that looks after his welfare and therefore *took an approach which is completely different* from what unions do elsewhere and that's why I classify it as a out of the box thinking.



# What Mr Lim thinks of Seacare



Below we present an exclusive interview with Mr Lim.

**Samudra: The idea for the formation of a co-operative society was conceived by the Singapore Organisation of Seamen in the early 90s. Why did you fully support the SOS's decision then?**

LBH: It is because of change in the global operating environment for seafaring. Earlier in the 70s, Singaporeans look towards the sea for a career but with the

developments ashore, the opportunities abounded, the wage levels in Singapore rose, and then by the 1990s the ship owners found that the wages of **seafarers onboard Singapore ships were not competitive**. The union was engaged in a constant tussle with the employers as to how many Singaporean seafarers they can retain onboard the ships and how many foreigners they would allow. *SOS recognized that its mission of protecting the welfare of its members would be to assure them of a job or to help them get a job and that job need not be onboard a ship. That was how Seacare was conceived and set up.*

Seacare provided the job matching services that help many members found alternative jobs ashore and quite a number of those jobs are shipping related. So, I felt that *they have really found the core mission of a trade union.*

**Samudra: You have on several occasions quoted the setting up of Seacare Co-operative Ltd by the SOS as a classic case of thinking out of the box to help members. What leads you to this opinion?**

LBH: Well, we just have to look around the rest of the world at how unions react whenever they face a structural change

**Samudra: How would you rate Seacare's success in fulfilling its founding mission which is 'to help and benefit Singapore seamen and their families through more work opportunities and appropriate investment projects'?**

LBH: *SOS and Seacare can look back with considerable pride.* The things that we should be looking at will be how many jobs have been created by Seacare as a co-operative. I believe the number into several thousands. From that key performance indicator, Seacare has done very well and Seacare has done it not because it subsidised the operations.

To be quite honest, when the Union set up Seacare and the union officials themselves were the ones who manage Seacare Co-operative, I was a bit worried that it might not have the management expertise to see this through, but they were smart enough to tap on the *advice of people in industry* who have got the business experience. So they brought such people onto their board of directors and benefited from their guidance and advice and so financially, Seacare is a success.

**Samudra: For the last 10 years, Seacare has firmly focused its activities on seamen. Are we on the right track if we continue to focus on them and their dependents?**

LBH: It is quite natural that Seacare focus itself on seafarers and the shipping community. If you look at the activities today, most of them are related to shipping. This is not wrong because it is something which the Union and Seacare personnel are familiar with. But in the future, how Seacare would develop, that remains to be seen because as times change, the focus may shift. Seacare may decide that the fundamental objective is to ensure that people have jobs not necessarily in the shipping sector but other sectors; and those other sectors may well grow. So, we won't know what happens say 10 or 15 years down the road. And in this respect, I must say that many successful companies today



did not start out with the core business and stayed successful with just that core business. Nokia is a case in point. Nokia today is known by everybody to be probably the leading manufacturer of mobile phones. But it started out in Finland manufacturing among other things, rubber boots. So, *who is to say what Seacare will become in the years ahead.*

**Samudra: In your opinion, does our current mission statement sufficiently express Seacare's present and future aspirations?**

LBH: *A mission statement is something that I believe is not static. The values and principles of an organisation will be constant and Seacare Board and Management should spend time to develop what your core principles and objectives are and then craft your mission statement.*

The mission statement although it would stand the test of time, it would have to be reviewed against the operating environment. In this respect, I think it is a good start to focus on what Seacare management knows best and that is the shipping sector. It is always good to start any business in fields which you are familiar with and then after that develop the experience.

If you feel that you have acquired enough, then branch out into other areas.

**Samudra: Could you comment on the new mission statement? Is it relevant in the ever changing and competitive environment?**

LBH: *It is appropriate for maybe the next 4 to 5 years. I would encourage the management and the board to revisit this 4 or 5 years down the road.*

**Samudra: Does it fully encompass Seacare's scope of businesses and activities and reflect the purpose of Seacare's existence?**

LBH: *It sufficiently covers and I am not going to be dogmatic. I don't believe that one should be dogmatic. When you do business, you first have to recognize what your strengths are and then match it against the opportunities that come by. When the capabilities and opportunities match, that's where you should go in. When you do business, you also develop other capabilities in time and when other opportunities come by, you may find that you have the core competencies to make a successful go of it. So, that's how it should be.*



# Bigger Market, Bigger



*Mr Leow present memento to Guest Speaker Dr Li De Li*



# Vision, Bigger Dreams



One of the highlights of the Seacare Workshop this year was the reassessment of the Seacare Mission. For one week, 29 Seacare Chairman, Directors and Senior Management staff of Seacare Group of Companies reviewed the Seacare Mission and strategic plans and cast their vision into the future to create a brand new mission for the Co-operative (see next page).

The exciting and challenging process that took place from 3 to 9 December 2004

concluded with a new mission statement for Seacare and with the Seacare team committing themselves to tackle the challenges ahead and fulfill the new mission with passion and tenacity.

Held in Guilin, China, another highlight of the Seacare Workshop 2004 was the official meeting with the five representatives from Singapore Maritime Employers Federation (SMEF). The meeting provided the ideal opportunity for Seacare and SMEF to further strengthen their network and deepen their close ties.

Besides the Seacare Mission, the objectives of the workshop cum SMEF meeting included the

- Review of Work Plans for FY 04/05
- Charting of Work Plans for FY 05/06
- Charting of Future Work Plans and
- Facilitating the growth of staff rapport and pride in belonging to the Seacare team.





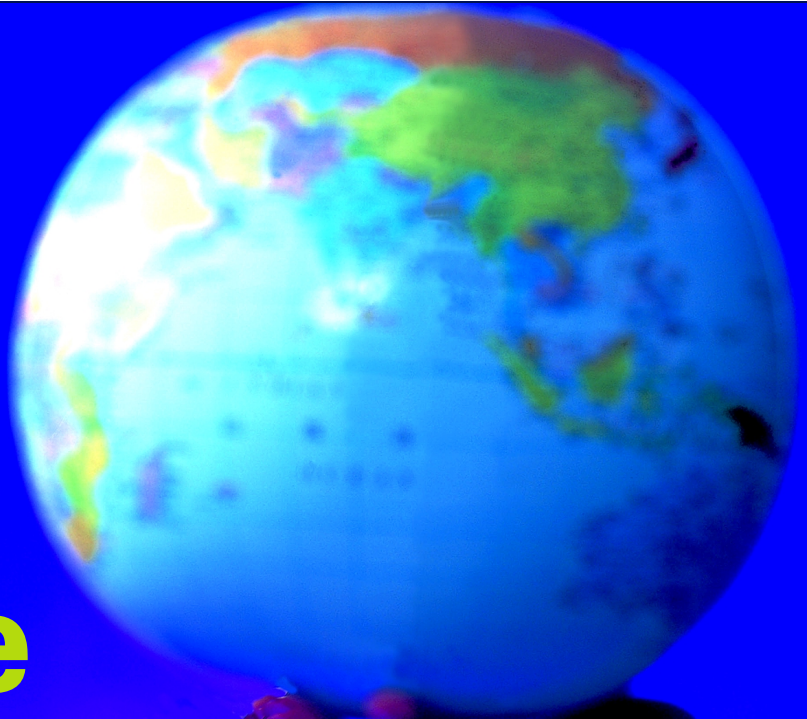
After one week of intense deliberation and purpose driven communication, the Seacare team returned home with a renewed sense of camaraderie, drive, inspiration and a brand new mission.

Below we highlight the Seacare Mission from the year the Co-operative was conceptualised to 2004 and we reveal the new mission for the years ahead.

# Seacare Mission (1995 - 2004)

*To help and benefit  
Singapore seamen and  
their families through  
more work opportunities  
and appropriate  
investment projects.*

# New Seacare Mission Statement



## Our focus

is to serve beneficially all seamen who share our vision and partake of our enterprise and also their dependents.



## Our vision

is to build up a viable and vibrant organisation of corporate enterprise under a co-operative masthead.



## Our scope

embraces the seafaring community, the shipping community and the general public through their valued and satisfied patronage of our services.





# Seacare Education Upbeat About China



Mr Yang Pei Gen, Seacare Education Assistant General Manager, is upbeat about the prospects in China. Samudra caught up with him for a little insight into the education business that the country offers.

## **How Big is the China Market?**

The teacher population of China's primary and secondary schools is three times of Singapore's population. And according to the 2003 National Education Development Statistics, there are some 655,500 kindergartens to universities and colleges in China. China is indeed very big.

## **Where Does Seacare Come In?**

The data pertaining to teachers' training I have compiled from the 5 Year (2003-2007) Training Plan published by the Ministry of Education of China reveals that 10 million primary and secondary school teachers will need to be trained in 4 specific areas namely: New Education Concept, New Course-Work, New Teaching Techniques and New Moral Education.

This is where Seacare Education can make a big impact. Seacare is experienced and renowned for taking good care of the people in the maritime industry. Seacare is now embarking on nurturing the mind and

soul by engaging in the championing of the bilingual teachers training project in China.

## **How Ready Is Seacare Education?**

As an education company, Seacare Education is new and comparatively small. Yet, as a business entity, Seacare Education is strong for its visionary leadership, competent project management skills, hands-on China investment expertise and readily available Singapore educational resources.

Once we take off, we are confident that we will succeed in this new venture eventually though the ride can be bumpy in the beginning.

# Exchanging Ideas on Education



only meets all teaching requirements expected by the Ministry of Education, it also allows students to participate in the GCE 'O' and 'A' levels. Students can sit for fundamental education examinations in Hong Kong, Canada or even USA if they wish to pursue a tertiary education in these countries.

The success of the Cambridge Bilingual Education System was evident through the active leadership of China's fundamental education towards modernisation. In fact, in line with its Ministry's plans, the system has actually helped raise the standard of education management and induced an education system aptly for further development.

Working together hand in hand is the surest driving force to enhance and extend the influence of education beyond borders, agreed the five groups of educators during a conference on 5 November 2004, held at the Singapore Teachers' Union headquarters. At the invitation of Seacare Education Pte Ltd, Educare Co-operative Ltd and NIE, officials from the China Society of Education (CSE) came to Singapore to discuss workplans and exchange ideas on bringing the quality of education in both respective countries to a new level.

The conference was part of a series of discussions on the system of education in Singapore, as well as that of China. Officials from the CSE, Mr Wang Wei, Dr Li De Li and Mr Guo Yan Ping, presented a brief introduction of Sino-Cambridge Education Co. Ltd (SCEC), an affiliation of CSE. It aims to become an international education platform by working on a feasible operational model for quality international education to penetrate through China eventually.

Following the examples of many developed countries, the SCEC's education system adopts the system of bilingualism. This is what makes the SCEC Cambridge Bilingual Education System in line with Singapore's education system. It not

Representing Educare Co-operative Ltd were Dr Ho Wah Kam, Mr Swithun Lowe and Mr Mike Thiruman and representing Singapore Teachers' Co-operative Ltd were Mr Anthony Samy, Mr Chua Poon Guan and Mr Fok Kim Fook. Following the introduction of SCES's education system by CSE, the host also gave a presentation titled "A Professional Development Program For School Leaders and Teachers".

Officials representing Seacare Education Pte Ltd include Chairman Mr Leow Ching Chuan, CEO Mr Goh Yeow Tin, Assistant General Manager Mr Yang Pei Gen and Project Manager Ms Gillan Teo, while NIE was represented by Associate Professor Goh Nghoh Khang, Dr Agnes Chang, Dr Chia Lian Sai and Dr Lee Peng Yee.

It has indeed been a fruitful meeting, with the many discussions and exchange of ideas and the introduction of the respective education systems. Promises of a closer working relationship were agreed upon for further collaboration. More concretely, plans to conduct seminars and exchange programmes between the teachers in Singapore and China and between principals and school administrators in China, were laid.



# Appreciating Good Co-operative Governance



Ten key personnel from Seacare joined directors and senior managers of other co-operatives in understanding their roles and responsibilities in co-operative management and the principles of good corporate governance.

Organised by the Singapore National Co-operative Federation (SNCF), the course in Co-operative Governance also aimed to help the Co-operative leaders to understand the

importance of internal control and the procedures for establishing, reviewing and evaluating the internal control structure.

Conducted over two different runs in October and November, the 10-hour course comprised of three sessions each. Through a series of lectures and interactive, engaging discussions, the participants also picked up tips on understanding co-operative annual reports and the concepts of accountability, stewardship and agency.

Participating in the course were Mr Nazarudin Nandok (Director of Seacare Co-operative Ltd), Mr Mohd Abu Bakar (Director of Seacare Holdings Pte Ltd), Mr Bon Sheun Ping (Director of Seacare Environmental Pte Ltd), Mr See Boon Kwang (Director of Seacare Thrift Pte Ltd), Mr Koh Tak Yang and Ms Jacquelyn Lam (Directors of Seacare Evolution Pte Ltd), Ms Shena Foo, Ms Sulena Supaat and Ms Evelyn Siow (Directors of Seacare Manpower Services Pte Ltd) and Ms Gillan Teo (Project Manager of Seacare Foundation Pte Ltd).

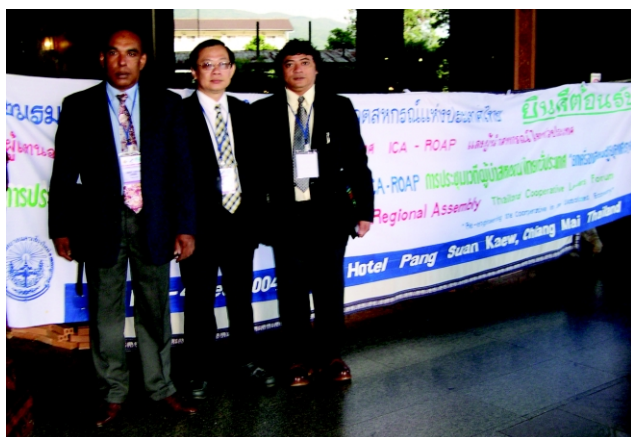
During the course, Associate Professor Victor Yeo, currently the Head of Division for Division of Business Law at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and a lecturer with the Singapore Institute of Directors, underlined the regulatory framework for Co-operatives, such as the Co-operative Societies Act. This included rights and liabilities of members and the key roles and responsibilities of Directors. He pointed out the importance of appreciating the need for good governance in relation to Co-operatives' values and how this entails the principles of good Corporate Governance. He also dealt on how accountability, transparency, integrity, key regulatory requirements and external guidelines underpin good corporate governance.

Lecturer Mr Simon Tan, a certified Public Accountant and lecturer at Ngee Ann Polytechnic School of Business and Accountancy facilitated on general understanding of Co-operative Annual Reports which covered Auditor's report and Financial Statements. Apart from lecturing on Principles of Accountability and introducing the internal control structure, Mr Tan also asked the participants to deliberate on the review and evaluation of Internal Controls. He revealed that good governance stretches beyond ascertaining and documenting the system. Accessing the control risk would be equally important.

The bottomline is - in order to gain the confidence of members, it is necessary to practice good corporate governance.



# ICA Meetings in Thailand



Thirty six participants from 10 Singapore co-operatives attended the major events of ICA Asia Pacific (AP) in Chiangmai, Thailand from 1 to 4 December 2004. Among the delegation, which was led by Singapore National Co-operative Federation Chairman Mr Seah Kian Peng, were Seacare Co-operative representatives, Mr Mohammad Kodrasono, Mr Ramjeet Jodoh and Mr Seow Siow Kiat.

On 1 December 2004, H.E. Chaturon Chaisang, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand, inaugurated the Joint Opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> ICA Regional Co-operative Forum and 6<sup>th</sup> ICA Regional Assembly. In his address to the 1,200 participants from 22 countries, H.E. Chaturon Chaisang noted that

it is a well-known fact that co-operative system was originated in order to help solve economic problems and to raise the people's standard of living which in turn will lead to a strong and stable community and society as a whole.

The theme of the two-day Forum was "Re-engineering Co-operatives in the globalised economy". The objective of the Forum was to provide a platform for co-operatives leaders and practitioners to have an open and frank discussion on issues facing the co-operatives for the overall development of the Co-operative Movement in the Region. The Forum was attended by 240 participants from member and international organizations representing 22 countries.

Mr Seah presented a paper on "Relevance of Consumer Co-operatives to Protect Consumers In A Globalised Market" while Mr Teo Say Hong, who was elected as the Vice Chairman of the ICA Regional Youth Committee at the recent Regional Youth Seminar held in Kuala Lumpur, delivered a speech on "Social Cohesion from a youth perspective – Changing attitudes of people in the Asia Pacific Region".

The next ICA Regional Assembly will be held in Sri Lanka which will coincide with the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the Co-operative Movement of Sri Lanka.



# Talking Business



SOS and Seacare Senior Executives, Managers and Directors decided to expand their knowledge and networking through an Intellectual Property Talk on 8 October 2004 at Club@52.

Organized by SNCF, the course on Intellectual Property was conducted by Dr Francis Tan, an expert in this field, who not only holds a Doctorate in BA (European University of Ireland), but also a string of other accolades ie MBA (Shanghai Jiaotong University), Diploma of Acupuncture and Diploma of Internal Medicine (Singapore Chinese Physician Training Institute).

Far from being a dry topic, the very engaging Dr Tan talked about the most valuable asset of a corporation. He said: **The highest market valuation goes to companies that have a competitive advantage in the form of assets that are difficult to reproduce legally.**

In the midst of a market landscape where intellectual property will dominate product differentiation and where the competition to corner the market for intellectual property is increasing, the emphasis on safeguarding intellectual property and the need to protect recurring income from competitive threat has become all the more relevant.

With such insightful thoughts and relevant case studies raised, many of the attendees left the talk enlightened and well-informed.



# Come Indulge Yourself

Ever wonder what goes into the mixing of the cocktails which Club@52 is famous for? The good news is Samudra managed to 'borrow' some highly sought-after recipes so that you can have an experiment or two. Better still, drop by at Club@52 where Mr Edmund Phua can show you a thing or two, and even whip up any cocktails to your heart's desire... Approach any of our friendly bartenders, Edmund, Joreen, Josephine and Jensen, who sure can shake up a storm and even tell you what beer is from where. With the wide variety of cocktails or simply chilled beer available, you would want to have a taste of everything!

Check out these cocktails and more at Club@52

Club@52

52 Chin Swee Road #02-00  
Seacare Building Singapore 169875

**Opening Hours:**

Mon to Sat: 5pm to 2am, Sun & Public Holiday: Closed. Tel: 6379 5657