

June 2012 - July 2012

seavoices

MICA (P) 036/11/2011

Bi-Monthly Publication of the **Singapore Maritime Officers' Union** and **Wavelink Co-operative**

May Day Dinner

29 April 2012

Guest-Of-Honour

Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Finance and Minister for Manpower

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MAY DAY HONOUR FOR SMOU ADVISERS AND GS



Of the many dedicated men, women, and organisations who had played major roles in the Labour Movement's advancement, three individuals associated with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (both past and present) were honoured this year for their stellar contributions. One of them is our very own General Secretary, Mr Thomas Tay.

The labour awards were conferred at the May Day Dinner held on 29 April 2012 at the Orchid Country Club with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Manpower Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam as Guest-of-Honour. Of the many dedicated men, women, and organisations who had played major roles in the Labour Movement's advancement, three individuals entwined in history with the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (both past and present) were honoured this year for their stellar contributions.

"The SMOU Executive Committee and I are proud to see our GS Thomas Tay receive the commendation from NTUC for all his hard work for the labour movement and union members, a cause he has dedicated his entire life towards."

– Ms Mary Liew, SMOU Executive Secretary, told SeaVoices.

They were Senior Director and Adviser of Industrial Relations in the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) Mr Ong Yen Her, Deputy Chairman for NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Ltd and Vice Chairman for NTUC Club Mr Matthias Yao, and Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) General Secretary Mr Thomas Tay. Mr Ong was previously SMOU's adviser in the late 70s and early 80s, while Mr Yao is a current adviser to the union.

In her opening address, NTUC President Diana Chia noted that the flowing on of leaders in NTUC's Central Committee at the NTUC National Delegates' Conference in December 2011 signaled a turning point in leadership transition.

Like the other eight Central Committee members who had chosen to flow on, Mr Thomas Tay who had been elected into the committee in 1991 and served as NTUC's Vice-President since 1998 made the decision to flow on to give younger unionists the opportunity to serve.

"These leaders have laid a strong foundation for the next generation of leaders to bring the labour movement and tripartism to greater heights," said Ms Chia.

"In honouring our brothers, sisters, and partners who have made significant contributions to the Labour Movement and to Singapore's Tripartism; and thanks to their examples, dedication and commitment, and the partnership of enlightened employers, we can continue to progress in creating better jobs and better lives for our workers, now and into the future."

– NTUC President Ms Diana Chia



Sharing a moment of joy and laughter



Mr Ong Yen Her engaging Member of Parliament Arthur Fong and Mr Thomas Tay in a conversation



**Comrade of Labour (Star) Award
Thomas Tay**

Nominated by National Trades Union Congress

Brother Thomas Tay first joined the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU) in 1976, and has been fighting ever since to help union members lead a comfortable professional life. It was a challenging period for the shipping industry when he first joined, with seafarers' exploitation being rampant, but Brother Thomas

succeeded in improving the lives of people around him and gained respect from his fellow seafaring officers.

As a strong advocate of workers' welfare and lifelong learning, under his leadership, the Alternate Career Scheme, a programme that helped members who suffered job losses in the late 80s and 90s acquire necessary skills for alternate careers was introduced. Brother Thomas also introduced the Seafarers Provident Fund to help members and their families rebuild their lives after experiencing disasters, and the Singapore Maritime Training Fund, which encouraged members to undergo training to develop their skills sets. SMOU's membership increased from 400 to about 26,000.

His dedication can be felt not just within the local maritime environment but also nationally and internationally. He was elected as Vice President of NTUC Central Committee in 1998, and he still sits on the board at various NTUC co-operatives. In the same year, Brother Thomas became the first Asian to be elected as Vice Chairman of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) Seafarers' Section, and he still serves several ITF committees today.

"This award is not just for me. It is for all our brothers and sisters in SMOU and NTUC, who have worked alongside me to create a better life for seafarers." – Mr Thomas Tay



**Distinguished Service
Star Award
Ong Yen Her**

Senior Director and Adviser on Industrial Relations Ministry of Manpower

In recognition of his long and dedicated service to the Labour Movement, the National Trades Union Congress presented Brother Ong Yen Her with the Distinguished Service (Star) Award.

SMOU congratulates our former advisor in appreciation of his selfless advisory role in past decades.

"On behalf of SMOU, we would like to thank Brother Yen Her for his contributions towards the well-being of our members and also for his outstanding and enthusiastic contributions to industrial relations in Singapore." – Ms Mary Liew



SMOU Executive Committee congratulated Mr Matthias Yao, SMOU Advisor and Mr Thomas Tay, SMOU General Secretary on their achievements.

**Meritorious Service Award
Matthias Yao Chih**

Deputy Chairman, NTUC Income Insurance Co-operative Ltd and Vice Chairman, NTUC Club



Brother Matthias Yao Chih brought to the Labour Movement a wealth of experience from his career in the civil service, which he first embarked on in 1980. After holding several positions, Brother Matthias was appointed Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office in 1999, and served as Deputy Secretary-General for NTUC. He left NTUC in 2004 to become the Mayor of the South East District. Brother Matthias continues to serve the Labour Movement as the Vice Chairman of the NTUC-Ong Teng Cheong Education Trust Fund and is currently an Adviser to five trade unions.

Brother Matthias was appointed Director and Deputy Chairman of NTUC Income in 1999 and still performs these responsibilities today. Brother Matthias has also played a key role in advising management on communicating with multiple stakeholders on a range of technical and demanding issues. As Deputy Chairman, he assists to ensure the board's effectiveness to bring up aspects of and promote high standards of corporate governance.

He has also been instrumental to the progress of the NTUC Club Management Council. Serving as its Vice Chairman for more than 10 years, he was always ready with invaluable input on how NTUC Club can improve its performance in the areas of social impact, financial sustainability and corporate governance standards.

In recognition of his invaluable contributions, the National Trades Union Congress presented Brother Matthias Yao Chih with the Meritorious Service Award.

"SMOU congratulates our advisor in appreciation of his commitment to maritime training and valuable advice over the years." – Capt Robin Foo



Tripartism at May Day Dinner with SNEF's Mr Stephen Lee, DPM Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam and NTUC SG Mr Lim Swee Say



L to R: VP of NTUC, Ms Nora Kang, AUPE Advisor, Mr Teo Yock Ngee, Minister of State, Finance & Transport Mrs Josephine Teo, SMOU GS Mr Thomas Tay and FDAWU GS Mr Tan Hock Soon



Ministry of Manpower's Mr Then Yee Thoong congratulating GS Mr Thomas Tay

LABOUR MOVEMENT AIMS FOR TWIN-GROWTH

BETTER JOBS FOR ALL



The main messages on May Day directed towards the Singapore population - Singaporeans are and will be prioritised in employment policies, and the labour movement's aim is for twin-growth in productivity and wages by 2020.



In his May Day rally speech, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had promised Singaporeans that they would take top priority in deciding the workings of employment policies. The ultimate goal was for them to achieve maximum success and advantage with better jobs and enjoy a cut of the nation's success. Even as Singapore has made good progress in the recent years, workers have also grown anxious over concerns about the increasing cost of living, especially in the health care sector.

Placing focus on average and low-wage workers, PM Lee pledged to take care of this group of employees while also stressing the need for sustainable improvements, and not to take big risks through short-term jumps. His speech reflected the Government's position on concerns over wages and foreign workers that have dominated debates in the employment matters over the recent months. It has been emphasised that foreign workers are needed to grow the economy, as the need for productivity gains to drive wages rises.

Our Flow-On leaders with arms raised in solidarity for the labour movement



PM Lee warned against quick solutions, such as the bold proposal by Professor Lim Chong Yah to push up the wages of low-wage workers by 50 per cent in the next 3 years. He resolved that the only solution was for wages and productivity to move in tandem. Low-wage workers may end up worse-off if wages rise too sharply, unmatched by improvements in productivity.

NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say also presented two new acronyms – QED and CBD, to describe his ideas on the twin-growth aim by the labour movement. The acronyms QED, which means “quite easily done” and CBD which stands for “can be done”, were used in Mr Lim’s anecdotes of companies and individuals who went against all odds to boost productivity and efficiency.



An employers’ group also said that wage guidelines set by the National Wages Council (NWC) might be insufficient in helping low-wage workers. They suggested for firms to do more to help this group of workers. The council advised firms to calculate annual pay rises by using a formula that contains both a fixed quantum and a percentage increase.



President of Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF) Mr Stephen Lee also suggested two ways for companies to further help their low-wage employees. The first was to devise creative methods to give more to those who earn less, without destroying the cost structure. Another way was to give a productivity boost to companies with many low-wage workers. Mr Lee stressed that companies ought to take the lead in the current productivity drive.

From L-R: Rena Piil Pedersen, AP Moller Maersk Director of Group Public Affairs (Asia Pacific), Capt Robin Foo, SMOU President and Mr Eric Von Livonius, Director of Maersk Tankers Singapore celebrating May Day together with SMOU

LABOUR MOVEMENT AIMS FOR TWIN-GROWTH BETTER JOBS FOR ALL



PM Lee's May Day Message

"Singaporeans will always be top priority. This is the purpose of all our policies."

That was the point PM Lee drove home as he spoke to 1,600 unionists, employers and government officials who gathered at Downtown East for the annual May Day rally on 1 May 2012.

He had said that employment policies by the Government seek to maximise advantages for Singapore citizens, providing them with jobs and a slice of the nation's success. He noted that crucial challenges would lie in increasing the wages of the lower-wage workers here. He added that these workers find themselves stuck in the same income stratum regardless of how hard they try to upgrade themselves.

He pointed out that other union leaders have told him of several other concerns faced by other members, such as the impact of inflation, sufficiency of Central Provident Fund savings and difficulties in retraining an ageing population.

PM Lee pledged to monitor the inflation rate to decide what else needed to be done, and to roll out programmes to aid in raising productivity and wages. The eventual aim is to improve the lives of average and lower-income Singaporeans. However, PM Lee also stressed that wages cannot be increased without productivity gains.

PM Lee explained the situations of other countries who are facing a similar problem in employment, such as the failure of welfarism and an ageing population. The proposed solution to tackling unemployment and wage issues is by keeping Singapore an open and confident country, open to competition and receptive to explore new opportunities.

He also touched on the issue of overcrowding in Singapore as a wide range of foreign professionals and workers are



being hired. It is one issue that will be debated this year. PM Lee pointed out that in reality, a mix of both perspectives is needed to strike a balance to create new and better jobs for Singaporeans.

"I said there is no magic number. It depends on the economic opportunities," said PM Lee when asked by one unionist how many foreign workers did Singapore need.

He noted that the number of foreign workers entering Singapore will have to slow down significantly in the coming years, as the nation is unable to bring in 80,000 foreign workers a year. PM Lee's challenge to the tripartite partners is to have Singapore be the first choice for investments and talent, and to ensure that Singapore citizens have better jobs, pay and lives.



SMOU Executive Committee celebrating May Day with the Labour Movement

SENG HAN THONG RETIRES FROM NTUC

NTUC Assistant Secretary-General (ASG) Seng Han Thong has officially retired on 22 April 2012. In his 15 years with the Labour Movement, ASG Seng has held various positions including Director for Organisation & Management and Leadership Development, Centric Director (Union), Executive Secretary for National Transport Workers' Union (NTWU) and Advisor to the National Taxi Association (NTA).

He has also helped NTUC Media Co-Operative Ltd since its early days having held positions as its Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Chairman of its Board of Directors.

Mr Seng will remain in the labour movement, volunteering as an advisor and trustee to nine unions and associations.

"We would like to thank Brother Han Thong for his many years of service in the labour movement. He has provided valuable contributions with his heart for transport workers and support to SMOU. We wish him the very best in the future."

– Ms Mary Liew, Executive Secretary of SMOU.

AMAZING MARITIME CHALLENGE AT SMW 2012

The Singapore Maritime Week (SMW) 2012 was officially launched by Mr Lui Tuck Yew, Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs at VivoCity. The event, organised by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) is in its 7th year running.

Held from 22 to 27 April, SMW 2012 was a fun-filled week packed with a line-up of conferences, meetings, dialogues and networking events that celebrate and showcase the diversity and vibrancy of Singapore's maritime industry.

To raise public awareness of the spirited maritime industry, MPA held several public outreach activities.

One of the highlights of SMW 2012 was the Amazing Maritime Challenge, where teams had to complete challenges through nine maritime-themed game stations set up in and around the Maritime Experiential Museum in Sentosa. More than 800 participants from all walks of life participated in the activity. In the spirit of tripartism, SMOU sent a team consisting of SMOU President, Capt Robin Foo, ExCo members, Ismail Ahmad, and Wilfred Thiang and Young SMOU member, Ong Zi Heng.



The SMOU team with Mr Lam Yi Young, Chief Executive of MPA and Mr Lui Tuck Yew, Minister for Transport and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs

"We hope that through these activities, we are able to share with the wider community about Singapore's dynamic and exciting maritime sector,"

said Mr Lam Yi Young, Chief Executive of MPA.

DISADVANTAGED FISHERMEN – IN DANGER AND ILL-TREATED

SMOU together with the missions and Singapore partners have installed a series of signages and hotline in the fishery port to assist and extend aid to fishermen in distress.

Young fishermen come from developing countries such as Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, China, India, Bangladesh and other regions in Asia. To fish for food consumption, these fishermen sign contracts, binding them to extremely long hours of fishing in a day and leave them subject to abuse by their employers. They ultimately face deception and fraud with concerns to the nature of their employment and salary.

Strict contract, no freedom beyond vessel

Be it for the sake of earning money or gaining nautical experience, seafarers have to undertake terms and conditions of a contract set by fishing boat captains. The agreement terms in these contracts leave fishermen with almost no freedom beyond the vessel. Besides Singapore, they are contractually disallowed to disembark the vessel. Should they defy, vessel owners are no longer held responsible for the welfare or repatriation of these fishermen. Instead, the disadvantaged fishermen will have to pay the hiring agency US\$2,000 (S\$2,400) as compensation should they breach any contractual terms.

Other terms in the agreement bind the fishermen's understanding to the living and working conditions onboard the vessel. Whether they are satisfactory and sanitary or not, these fishermen reach a point of no return once they sign. The vague situations fishermen eventually get themselves into include having to live in cramped quarters, rationing the drinking water and suffer the intolerance of habitual seasickness by their employers – withholding of their salaries. The salary scheme for these fishermen gives them only \$50 out of their \$200 salary every month. Of which, the remaining salary amount is paid as a lump sum only at the end of their three-year tenure.

Lack of jurisdiction

Even as foreign fishermen attempt to seek redress from exploitation through interviews with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), Singaporean authorities are unable to investigate due to the lack of jurisdictional rights. Additionally, the trafficking crimes are believed to have been committed outside of Singapore's labour laws.



MOM maintained their responsibility to investigate all labour abuses, while the Singapore Police Force would investigate on criminal offenses under the Penal Code's statute concerning forced labour.

Greenpeace, an independent organisation that protects the environment and promotes peace, particularly reported Taiwanese fishing vessels to be the main culprits of over-fishing and conducting illegal fish-laundering activities. In addition, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) also documented poorly paid fishermen who were subject to physical and mental abuse in their sub-standard working environments.



Gruelling work, shoddy living environments

The living quarters of fishermen onboard a fishing boat is no less than appalling. Four to eight men could be forced to squeeze into one small cabin. With only enough space to get into their beds, the only form of recreation for these men is a tiny television positioned in an adjacent cabinet



space. The sub-standard condition of these furniture fittings is what fishermen have to live with. A small shelf at the foot of their bed is all there is to hold their personal belongings.

The cooking area is marred by grease, signs of long-term usage of the facilities, including a basin that has one of its legs bent outwards. The eating area takes on a communal style, where fishermen are seated closely and share plates of cooked vegetables with individual bowls of white rice.

Kenyan fishermen onboard a Taiwanese fishing vessel, Tai Yuan No 32 CT6, had problems with the fishing boat captain. The fishermen had wanted to return to Kenya, as the vessel was due back in Taiwan for a major overhaul. In addition, they had been working onboard for 13 months straight. The ship captain, Mr Chu, accused the fishermen of breaching their signed contract with him, and denied having to bear any costs for these men to return to Kenya. Defending themselves, the Kenyan fishermen said they were contractually obligated to work only on the said vessel, and not on a related one, which Mr Chu assigned them to while his vessel was under repair.

Longline fishing, long hours of work

One instance of fishing endured by the disadvantaged fishermen is longline fishing, a type of commercial fishing technique. It involves around 10 kilometres of fishing line adorned with about 30,000 fishhooks. The fishing baits are placed at intervals on the long line, also called the main line. Due to the large amount of work needed to carry out longline fishing, fishermen can work from 16 to 18 hours in a day.

Besides the long hours of fishing and living in shabby quarters, the danger in the fishermen's line of work is apparent when they are out in choppy waters. In strong currents and storms, the fishing boat endures arduous beating of the waves, and so do the fishermen on deck. Seeing how some boats can be damaged from the aggressive weather, bravery is a prerequisite trait for these fishermen.

As longline fishing typically aims to capture the tuna and swordfish species, the catches by these fishermen are stored in the freezer until the fishing boat docks. During the process of storing and unloading the frozen fish, some fishermen suffer from frostbites due to the lack of proper protective gear. As a result, some lose their toes or fingers as the extreme cold cuts off blood supply and causes nerve damage.



Blackened fingers and toes are results of extreme cases of frostbite, which eventually leads to gangrene infection. Left untreated, the frostbitten parts will fall off or will have to be amputated. Besides that, fishermen also face occupational accidents and deaths, being unable to terminate their contracts and non-receipt of their wages.

Facing capture and death by pirates

As marauders are present and especially active around the South East Asian regions, Papua New Guinea and Somalia, so are the fishing boats that trawl those waters. In 2008, Somalia pirates took over a Chinese vessel name Tian Yu 8, holding the fishing crew captive as they watched over them with firearms.

Ekawatnaya was another victim of pirates, as the Indian Navy blew up the deep-sea trawler back in November 2008. The owners, Sirichai Fisheries, originated from Thailand confirmed that their vessel was destroyed, and only one out of the 15 crew members was rescued.

Captain of Goldbest FV, a Taiwanese fishing vessel, voiced out concerns for fishermen, particularly the lack of security and assurance to their lives. When hijacked by Somali pirates, extreme ransom prices and the lives of the fishermen are at stake. This could also pose as discouragement for other fishermen, diminishing the number of men willing to work on fishing vessels.

How to help

What can be done to put these disadvantaged fishermen in a better position? Advocate and lobby for fairer treatment of these seafarers. Provide these fishermen with legal and social assistance to encourage them to strive for better working and living environments. Enforce international labour laws to ensure that employers adhere to the guidelines, and to protect fishermen and ship captains from the threats by pirates.

SMOU OFFICIALS VISIT FKSU



The Federation of Korean Seafarers (FKSU) Learning Exchange was held from 9 to 12 April.

The SMOU officials who attended the exchange programme included SMOU General Secretary, Mr Thomas Tay, SMOU Executive Secretary, Ms Mary Liew, Industrial Relations (IR) Manager, Mr Gwee Guo Duan and International Division Secretariat, Mr Wilfred Thiang. They visited the FKSU headquarters which was located in Busan.

The exchange programme served as a learning opportunity as SMOU officials got to learn about the maritime industry in Korea, and more about their training, welfare services and facilities available to Korean seafarers and FKSU members. The exchange also gave participants from SMOU and FKSU the chance to build stronger relationships and strengthen solidarity.



During the programme, members also paid tribute to more than 8,900 seafarers who died while working in the seas over the last 33 years. The tribute took place at the Taejondae Memorial Cenotaph which was erected by the Korean Maritime tripartite partners.

ALAM AKADEMI LAUT MALAYSIA PRESENTS BEST OVERALL CADET AWARD

On 23 March 2012, Mr Victor Ho Seong Tuck was awarded Best Overall Cadet at the Malaysian Maritime Academy's 104th Convocation Ceremony. 507 cadets who attended Diploma studies in Nautical Studies and Marine Engineering were present. Officials who attended the ceremony included SMOU President, Capt Robin Foo, SMOU Industrial Relations (IR) Manager, Mr Gwee Guo Guan and Wavelink Maritime International (WMI) General Manager, Mr Larry Chan.

Mr Ho's interest in a maritime career first grew when he started sourcing for information regarding the industry from newspapers and from online discussion forums. One of the aspects that attracted him to the prospects of sailing was its remuneration benefits. Mr Ho enjoyed all the times he spent during his sea phase training, acquiring valuable experience in cross-cultural communications, organisational and navigational skills. He finds that the disciplined and regimentation system is an ideal way to produce world-class seafaring professionals.

Since obtaining a Diploma in Nautical Studies, Mr Ho was sponsored by American Eagle Tankers (AET). We look forward to Mr Ho's contribution towards the maritime industry. Besides AET, other graduates were also sponsored by MIC Berhad, V-Ship, PETRONAS and many more.



SMOU APPEALS FOR SACKED AUCKLAND WHARFIES



At the Ports of Auckland, 300 members of the Maritime Union of New Zealand were laid off by Ports of Auckland Limited (POAL) after they staged strikes in an attempt to negotiate and secure their jobs. Affiliates of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) informed SMOU of the dispute between the workers and management. Expressing concern over the situation, SMOU President Captain Robin Foo, wrote a letter urging New Zealand High Commissioner, Mr Peter Hamilton to address the issue and provide immediate intervention.

Given that New Zealand holds a good reputation as a fair and honest country with a positive track record on labour relations, the letter stated that such behaviour from POAL undermines the positive image of the country. Furthermore, it is also sending a wave of action throughout the international trade union community.

Mr Hamilton responded to the letter, saying that the Government will continue to encourage and aid involved parties in achieving a resolution for the dispute. However, what the ultimate outcome would be is an issue for the parties to resolve. The New Zealand Department of Labour mediators have also engaged and remained available to the parties to assist resolution. In the case where bargaining is unsuccessful, there are provisions for the New Zealand Government to give assistance in the form of mediation and facilitation services.

SHIPPING COMPANIES RECEIVE SMTF UPDATES



Since its inception in 2003, the Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF), a collaboration between SMOU and shipping partners with Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) to train quality officers for Singapore Flagged vessels, have benefitted 893 cadets and 4253 officers. This update was shared to some 23 shipping companies at a Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF) briefing on 6 and 9 March 2012.

Organised by the Industrial Relations (IR) department and the Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI), the briefing started with an introduction about SMTF to the new companies under CBA, presented by Mr Terence Tan and Mr Daylen Tan from the IR department, and Mr Larry Chan from Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI). During the briefing, SMOU shared the importance of providing placements and opportunity for Singaporean cadets. The presenters also encouraged companies to utilise SMTF to provide better quality training to officers, advantageous for situations in future.

Looking ahead, three CadetsPlus programme in China, Philippines and Indonesia will benefit some 240 cadets. The OfficersPlus too, will be conducted in 12 phases, enriching 320 officers. Four new courses will also be added to tap on SMTF. The courses include Bridge Team Management, Ship-handling, Ship Security Officer and Ship Safety Officer. The briefing concluded as the attendees engaged in a Question-and-Answer session with SMOU.

ITF INSPECTORS ATTEND MLC2006 WORKSHOP

SMOU Senior Industrial Relations Officer (IRO) Mr Alvin Cheong attended a customised workshop held from 5 to 9 March 2012 at the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) International Training Centre in Turin, Italy.

The second representative from SMOU's Industrial Relations (IR) Division to participate in the workshop, Mr Cheong was also able to glean lessons from ITF inspectors representing 20 other countries on IR matters concerning seafarers. As of 30 March 2012, 25 ILO Member States have ratified the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention (MLC 2006).

Aimed at promoting a better understanding of how the MLC 2006 supports the work of ITF inspectors and seafarer unions, the IR department will now be better equipped to deal with grievances and dispense relevant advice to seafarers on their rights covered under the Convention.



Mr Alvin Cheong (second from left) together with ITF inspectors and unionists

A HEART FOR SEAFARERS

DAYLEN TAN, SMOU INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER

Many would have seen or noticed him in action. And he is definitely no stranger to shipping partners, maritime officers, and members covered under SMOU CBA vessels. Mr Daylen Tan has been with SMOU for over a year now. SeaVoices speaks to the former travel and hotel Assistant Sales Manager to uncover the man, his ambition and mission.



SV: What drives you? What do you hope to accomplish in your capacity as a SMOU IRO?

DT: I want to live a full and active life which motivates me to reach my fullest potential. As an IRO, I fight for the rightful entitlements of seafarers and together with my colleagues; I want to be a part of a team which helps to raise Singapore's profile as an international maritime hub.

SV: What attracted you to Industrial Relations?

DT: I have always been a people person. I like meeting and interacting with people from all walks of life. This convinced me to pursue a career as an IRO, which apart from meeting people, bestows the responsibility of preserving the welfare of seafarers. I am glad to be given the opportunity to do something different, in an area which I like and best of all, to be able to make a difference in the lives of others.

SV: What has been your most unforgettable IR moment?

DT: It has got to be a grievance case which happened in June 2011. At the

time my colleagues and I boarded the vessel; the ship's crew had already been in Singapore waters for the past 3 months and were denied 4 and more months of their salaries.

After referring the case to the court for settlement, the vessel was sold to reimburse the seafarers' salaries and fees for their repatriation. The total sum amounted to about US\$550,000 for all 23 seafarers onboard.

Seeing their beaming faces and hands clutching onto their hard-earned money, I knew that I had made the right decision to enter the maritime industry for the betterment of seafarers everywhere. Through this incident, I made friends with a few of the crew members. We are still in contact.

SV: You have also been appointed Vice Chair of Young SMOU (YSMOU). What are some plans in the pipeline for YSMOU?

DT: We are looking at reaching out and recruiting more young members by organising interesting activities and team building events. Some of which are a dragon boat race, youth networking, movies, and orientation programmes.

NYK INCREASES WAGE SCALE



NYK and the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union have successfully sealed a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) on 14 February 2012. This time, NYK adjusted the salaries of seafarers and the other terms to adhere to the rest of the agreement.

The outcome of the agreement to increase the wages to meet the demands of the industry was considered to be a good move by NYK. The signing of the agreement was represented by Deputy General Manager, Capt Anuraj Singh, Industrial Relations Manager, Gwee Duo Guan and Chief Executive Officer, Capt Tomoyuki Komaya.

The company and union agreed that the CBA would not have been possible without a long-standing and cordial relationship built over the years.

AP MOLLER MAERSK RENEWS COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

AP Moller Singapore Pte Ltd has renamed their holding company to Maersk Tankers Singapore Pte Ltd. The company's vessels are all now registered under five different companies, with Maersk Tankers Singapore Pte Ltd as the main representative.

They have also settled on a three-year period to gradually increase the wage scale based on the total crew wage.

In addition, Maersk has put in place a new clause concerning cargo-handling, in view of the incident at Port of Auckland to prevent a similar incident from happening.

The favourable agreement signifies the good working relationship between the union and the company. Maersk and SMOU will continue to strive for a continuous strong bipartite relationship.



VESSEL ARRESTED FOR OUTSTANDING MORTGAGE LOAN

The arrest of vessel "MV Road Runner" took place on 18 February 2012 by Piraeus Bank A.E, due to an outstanding mortgage loan. There were 26 crew members onboard the vessel during the time of the arrest, 15 of whom were reaching the end of their respective contracts of employment. On 27 February, the bank's lawyer boarded the vessel to pay the outstanding wages due to the 15 crew members.



Upon completion of their employment contracts, these crewmen would be ready for repatriation. The bank also offered to pay the remainder of their wages up till 29 February. Thus, the crew agreed to the offer and were duly paid their wages up till 29 February. No compensation was paid for early termination, or for the rest of the crew whose contracts were not yet completed. Subsequently, the crew had to sign a Release Assignment and Subrogation document, waiving their rights to make any further claims for unpaid wages. They signed-off on the Ship's articles effectively on 29 February.

The ship's master was the only person who refused to sign-off on the ship's articles. He cited unhappiness in the way he and the crew were pressured to accept money from the bank without any compensation. The bank's lawyer was informed of his persistence to stay onboard the vessel to fulfill the remainder of his employment contract.

However, the bank's lawyer reminded the ship's master that having already taken the money of the offer, any attempt to retract on the deal would be known as an act of theft. If so, the bank would recover payments made to him and the crew, as well as press additional criminal actions against them.

Representatives from SMOU, SOS and Gurbani & Co went onboard on 28 February to ascertain the happenings and addressed the crew's grievances. Gurbani & Co was instructed to act on the



crew's behalf. They took the chance to explain to the crew their rights and pacify them. It was explained to the crew facing premature termination that they would have a claim for early termination and unpaid wages beyond 29 February.

The crew were appeased and agreed to be repatriated without prejudice to their claims for early termination and unpaid wages. Nine crew members decided to claim for early termination and unpaid wages beyond 29 February 2012. Piraeus Bank A.E also retracted its earlier statement.





SLIPPERS FOR A CAUSE

PROJECT HAPPY FEET



As part of a regional initiative, Young SMOU Chairman Terence Tan brought smiles to the faces of Cambodian children as Young NTUC embarked on "Project Happy Feet" – a community service project that reaches out to underprivileged children both locally and within the region. Reaching out to children in Cambodia in late March this year taught Terence how a small gesture of kindness can go a longer way. SeaVoices speaks to the Young SMOU activist to find out more about his experiences on the project.

SV: Describe your Project Happy Feet (PHF) and Cambodia experience.

Terence: It was a rewarding and fruitful experience for me and a great learning opportunity for the whole group, as we learnt how to work together and how our decisions affect the people we were helping. We reflected nightly on each day's happenings and discussed about the beneficiaries and whether any further assistance could be rendered.

SV: What were some highlights of your trip?

Terence: One amazing experience was the visit to Smach Village in the Kralanh District of Siem Reap adopted by Shinta Mani Foundation. The 2-hour, backbreaking ride through kilometres of bumpy dirt road brought us to a school with many children without footwear. We immediately set out to work, distributing the slippers sponsored by Havaianas under the hot sun.

While fitting the slippers onto the kids' feet, I noticed many of them bore wounds and scars on their swollen feet. I could not imagine how these kids walk to school on bumpy roads in the scorching heat without any footwear. I tried walking barefooted myself, but the road was just too hot and riddled with pebbles and stones.



The supply of slippers was insufficient. After some planning, we ended up at the Siem Reap market to purchase additional school supplies and slippers for the children. I learnt that what these children needed was not just money; they needed life skills to equip them for a better livelihood.

SV: What compelled you to participate in PHF?

Terence: I got to know about PHF last year as they held a slipper race in Singapore. Like NTUC, they are passionate in helping people by improving members' working conditions and enhancing their economic and social statuses. Young NTUC introduced the project to some of its committee members, and I took the chance to learn more about it. This was where my learning journey began.

SV: How are you inspired by PHF as an activist?

Terence: I'm inspired by the people around me who dedicate so much time and energy to the different causes they believe in. I also learnt that not everyone is as fortunate, especially people outside Singapore. Putting in a little effort to make their lives better can indeed go a long way. What I offer may not be enough to change the world, but I could at least try to change someone's day for the better. Changing the world is a collective process, and I want to be a part of that process.

*Photos were kindly contributed by Project Happy Feet

RENEWAL OF THE IBF AGREEMENT

The International Bargaining Forum (IBF) brings together the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) and International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC) that make up the Joint Negotiating Group (JNG).

The recent renewal of the IBF agreement saw a main change in the increment of wages for the next three years, by 2%, 2.5% and 3%. Seafarers' probationary period has increased to either one third of the employment contract, but in any case, no more than 10 weeks. A new watch-keeping clause has been added to prevent fatigue from setting in, by ensuring a three-man rotation over a 24-hour period.

The amount of compensation for death and disability has been increased along with the increment in wages as well. The final compensation amount by 2014 is set to be US\$95,949 (S\$119,000), and US\$19,190 for each dependent child below 18 years old.

The IBF framework agreement faces negotiation every two years. When the framework agreement has been negotiated, unions that are ITF affiliated would begin local negotiations with companies in their country. Local negotiations result in national and sometimes company level IBF agreements. Local negotiations result in national and sometimes company level IBF agreements.



FAMILY CONNECTION @ NUSS GUILD HOUSE

SMOU's Family Connection event was held on 31 March 2012 at the NUSS Guild House in Suntec City where more than 100 members and their family members turned up for an evening of family bonding.

Members arrived at the venue as early as 6.30pm to a sumptuous buffet dinner and participated in three-hours of fun and games which got them on their feet.

One of Singapore's top magicians, "Mystifying Imran" also put on a good show for attendees, as he wowed them with his baffling illusions. The evening climaxed in a lucky draw; where 10 families brought home fantastic prizes.



FAMILY CONNECTION – NATIONAL DAY PREVIEW



**SATURDAY,
4 AUGUST 2012**

**Time:
7pm – 9pm**

**Where:
Mega Event Hall
@ Singapore Flyer**

For the month of August, Family Connection pays tribute to Singapore in conjunction with the nation's 47th birthday. Aimed at family bonding, attendees will be provided with a buffet dinner, exhilarating games and fun entertainment! Families also stand a chance to win exciting lucky draw prizes!



ANNUAL BOWLING CHALLENGE BY YOUNG SMOU

**SATURDAY,
7 JULY 2012**

**Time:
10am – 1pm**

**Where:
Orchard Bowl
@ eHub!
Downtown East**

The 7th Annual Bowling Challenge is here again! Be a part of the action as individuals and teams slug it out to win tournament prizes and the ultimate Annual Bowling Challenge trophy!



Get more exciting event updates on our website www.smou.org.sg today!

Update your email address with us booking@smou.org.sg to receive news of our latest events!

SMOU SEAFARERS' PROVIDENT FUND



The SMOU Seafarers' Provident Fund (SPF) looks after the interests and well-being of seafarers in the form of a savings scheme. As an "umbrella for rainy days", it meets its objective of providing financial assistance to seafarers and their families when seafarers submit their withdrawals.

Officers who have reached the age of 50 years and have had a Seafarers' Provident Fund account for at least 3 years are eligible to withdraw their SPF funds. They may do so via the SPF online system at www.ispf.org.sg.

Officers may also view their SPF balance via this online system.

For more details on the SPF withdrawal:
 email spf@wavelink.com.sg
 or visit www.ispf.org.sg

Officers without access to this online system may simply register at the URL by performing the following steps:-

1. Go to www.ispf.org.sg
2. Click "Member registration"
3. Enter all the particulars required by the system (SMOU ID and Thrift ID are not compulsory fields) and click "Register".
4. A confirmation email will be sent by the iSPF system to the member's email.
5. Go to "www.ispf.org.sg" again to key in member's username
6. Click the "iSPF Member" button.
7. Click the "Log in" button

RENEWAL GIFTS FULLY REDEEMED

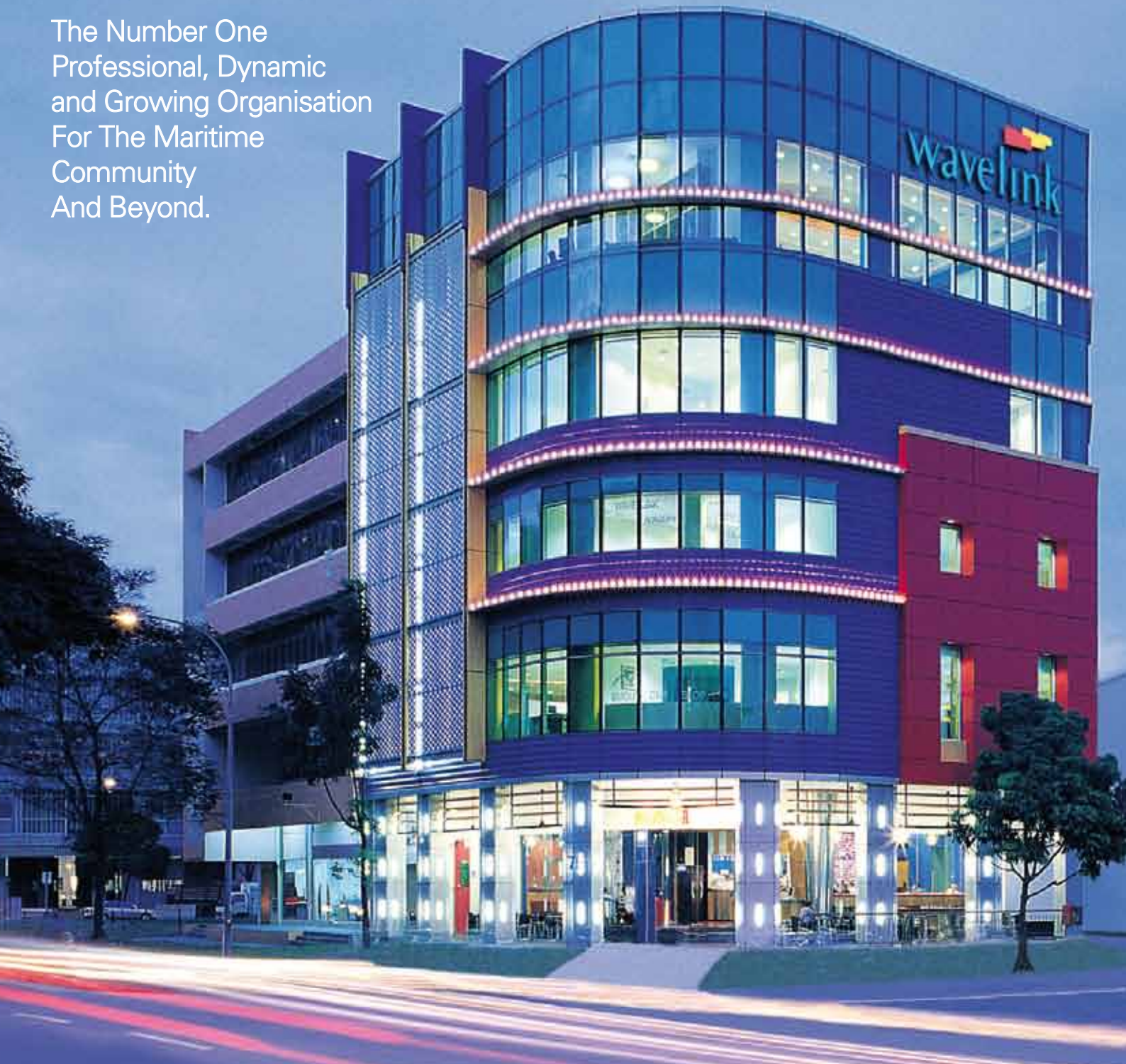
Thank You

once again for your support throughout the years.



OUR VISION

The Number One
Professional, Dynamic
and Growing Organisation
For The Maritime
Community
And Beyond.



Subsidiary Companies and Business Divisions



TRAINING CALENDAR

WMI Training Calendar (June - August 2012)							
Course Title	Date	Duration	Course Fee	Course Title	Date	Duration	Course Fee
MPA Mandatory Courses							
Pilotage Exemption (Large Vessel) Course & Assessment	On Demand	5 hrs	\$2,675.00	Experienced Tug Master (Refresher)	On Demand	1.5 Hrs	\$460.10
Pilotage Exemption (Large Vessel) Renewal Assessment	On Demand	2.5 hrs	\$1,401.70	Passenger Ferry Safety (New)	On Demand	1 Day	\$294.25
Pilotage Exemption (Small Vessel) New	On Demand	1 Day	\$383.06	Passenger Ferry Safety (Refresher)	On Demand	4 Hrs	\$230.05
Pilotage Exemption (Small Vessel) Refresher	On Demand	3 hrs	\$333.80	Port Limit Special Grade (Deck Officer)	On Demand	3 Days	\$449.40
Port Limit Tanker Master (New)	On Demand	1.5 Days	\$591.70	Bunker Surveying Course	On Demand	2 Days	\$321.00
Port Limit Tanker Master (Refresher)	On Demand	4 hrs	\$255.70	Oil Spill Control	On Demand	1 Day	\$171.20
Tug Master (New)	On Demand	3 hrs	\$837.80				
Maritime Courses							
Maritime Resource Management Course (MRM)	09 - 11 Jul	3 Days	\$909.50	IMO Model Course 3.19* (Ship Security Officer)	10 - 11 Jul	2 Days	\$642.00
Maritime Resource & Bridge Team Management Course	09 - 13 Jul	5 Days	\$1,605.00	IMO Model Course 3.20* (Company Security Officer)	10 - 12 Jul	3 Days	\$963.00
IMO Model Course 1.27 (Operational Use of ECDIS)	11 - 15 Jun 13 - 17 Aug	5 Days	\$1016.50	IMO Model Course 3.21* (Port Facility Security Officer)	12 - 14 Jun 6 - 8 Aug	3 Days	\$963.00
IMO Model Course 1.22 (Ship Simulator and Bridge Teamwork)	11 - 13 Jul	3 Days	\$1,070.00	ISM & ISPS Internal Auditor*	17 - 19 Jul	3 Days	\$1,284.00
Shiphandling Course	11 - 13 Jul	3 Days	\$1,284.00	ISM Internal Auditor*	17 - 18 Jul	2 Days	\$695.50
Ship Safety Officer Course	On Demand	2 Days	\$642.00	ISPS Internal Auditor*	18 - 19 Jul	2 Days	\$856.00
Maritime Introductory Courses							
Familiarisation on Operational Use of ECDIS	11 - 12 Jun 13 - 14 Aug	2 Days	\$535.00	Designated Person Ashore (DPA) Training Course	19 - 20 Jun 14-15 Aug	2 Days	\$749.00
Safety Culture for Optimum Safety Performance	On Demand	1 Day	\$272.85	Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 Awareness Programme*	11 Jun 28 Aug	1 Day	\$321.00
Ship Security Awareness Course	On Demand	1 Day	\$171.20	Familiarisation with Shipping Terms & Maritime Jargon	On Demand	1 Day	\$272.85
				Introduction to Risk Management	On Demand	1 Day	\$272.85

* Maritime Cluster Fund (MCF) training grant is available for eligible participants

Course Fees inclusive of 7% GST

Visit us at: www.wavelink.com.sg/wmi



For registration or enquiries, please contact:
Ms Christina Tey
Tel: (65) 6390 1648
Fax: (65) 6295 1121
Email: courses@wavelink.com.sg

For MPA Mandatory Courses, please contact
Mr Kevin Loh
Tel: (65) 6874 7782
Fax: (65) 6874 7666
Email: kevin@wavelink.com.sg

Mr Rivin
Tel: (65) 6874 7782
Fax: (65) 6874 7666

LIFE BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

The real test for any Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) Deck Officer is when they're on the job. That's when all the training and theory received in the classroom, is put into real life practice. That's when the real lessons in life are experienced.

We hear from two cadets how their experience has been for them!



From L-R: Thani Raju & Rozaili Nik

Rozaili Nik – Work Will Never Finish

Graduating from the second cohort of TNTA programme for officer cadets, 38 year-old Rozaili Nik has been quick to bond with new colleagues during his attachment with Bourbon Offshore. His enthusiasm to learn has aided in creating a positive outlook for his stint until December this year.

Working on offshore vessels that services oil rigs and handling anchors, Nik has sailed to China, South Korea, Thailand and Russia in his nine-month journey thus far. With a zest for sailing and working on the seas, Nik enjoys learning new skills and technicalities each time he boards a new vessel.

Having the chance to sail onboard different ships also means meeting people of various nationalities. Nik's most recent voyage consisted of other sailors of Thai, Indonesian and Myanmar descent. His appreciation for a captain from Thailand comes from his concern for Nik's learning onboard the vessel. Rather than reprimanding, the captain's teaching method encourages critical thinking on Nik's part to facilitate the learning process.

During a voyage to Russia, the crew had to move a heavy aircon unit to the AHU room. It took a good amount of teamwork to complete the tedious task, making that one of the memorable onboard experiences for Nik.

He finds that the window of opportunity provided by the TNTA programme allows people like himself to enter the sailing career, especially so when applications are also open to those who hold only 'N' Levels certificates. The transition from classroom to the ship itself is also eased, as theory is put into application when cadets go out to sea. Suggesting improvements to the programme, Nik finds that more practical experience will aid future seafarers to understand their purpose and how to better fulfill tasks assigned to them, such as using certain equipment onboard the vessels.

Nik also advises future cadets to hold a good amount of discipline, courtesy and humility when they go out to sea. An inquisitive mind will enable them to learn quickly and not be afraid to raise questions when in doubt. Being onboard is the best chance to gain as much practical knowledge as possible. Morally, family support is vital for cadets to achieve and excel, as that helps to give cadets the self-confidence needed when out at sea.





Thani Raju – Cherish the Opportunity

Employed under Pacific International Lines, Thani Raju has familiarised himself onboard container ships and finds that sacrificing time away from family is essential, especially to make an achievement in life.

29-year old Raju will be on voyages until December 2012, and so far, it has been an enriching, eye-opening experience for him. Roaming the seas onboard container ships, he has since travelled to South-east Asian and middle-eastern countries. Raju also pointed out that having the discipline to complete what is assigned to one person would make the ship a cohesive working environment for all.

An experience that will stay etched in Raju's memory was when a container ship he was on almost got hijacked by pirates. The ship was travelling around Djibouti in the Middle East, near the Gulf of Aden, when Raju and the rest of the crew were activated to counter the pirate attack. Fortunately, the hijack did not take place as the pirates were scared off by the readiness of the ship's crew.

Raju had taken on such a career as he found it to be out of the ordinary and aspired for others to look up to him. Moreover, he finds that opportunities for a Singaporean to steer a ship and sail the seas should be cherished.

He also advises future cadets to take in as much as possible when out at sea, as they are expected to hold a wealth of knowledge after their cadetship. Nonetheless, seafarers should constantly strive to upgrade their skills.



TNTA Programme

Under the Tripartite Nautical Training Awards (TNTA) programme, aspiring seafarers have to undertake six months of pre-sea training, 18 months of shipboard learning at sea, before returning back on land. Then, they will have to complete a four-and-a-half-month preparatory programme and two months of Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Ancillary Courses. Upon passing the Class 3 Deck Officer Certificate of Competency examination, cadets will be certified to work onboard international vessels.

Job Opportunities Briefing For MARITIME OFFICERS

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or call **6474 3777** from
9 am - 6 pm, Monday to Friday

Registration closes on 28 May 2012 or when registration is full. Admission is strictly by pre-registration

Date : 29 May 2012, Tuesday

Time : 10 am and 2 pm

Venue : Bukit Batok Community Club

21 Bukit Batok Central

Singapore 659959

(5 mins walk from Bukit Batok MRT)

REQUIREMENTS:

- Singaporeans and Singapore PRs only
- Min GCE 'N' levels with passes in English, Maths and Physics/ Chemistry
- Good colour/ night vision as required for MPA certification
- Able to commit to 31 months of training (including 18 months at sea)

Jointly Organised by:



Supported by:



WMI CONDUCTS FIRST CADETSPLUS CHONGQING



Some 100 cadets graduated on 20 April 2012 from CadetsPlus Chongqing after completing their four-week learning stint. Held in Chongqing for the first time, these aspiring cadets were readied for sailing in international waters by Chongqing Jiaotong University, which translates to Chongqing University of Transportation.

The training in Chongqing was held from 26 March to 20 April 2012. Cadets had to go through training modules such as Maritime English, Legislative Requirements, Maritime Occupational Safety, Health & Environmental Protection and Shipboard Organisational Behaviour & Management.

Shipping employers working with the CadetsPlus programme include AP Moller Maersk, AET Ship Management, BW Fleet Management Pte Ltd, GBLT Shipmanagement Pte Ltd, I.M. Skaugen Marine Services Pte Ltd and PACC Ship Managers Pte Ltd.



The graduation ceremony and dinner was entirely organised by the aspiring cadets themselves. The seafarers, trained and transformed by the CadetsPlus programme, will go on to represent their country onboard ships, sailing across oceans.

The subsequent CadetsPlus programme, CadetsPlus Philippines will be held in Cebu, Philippines from 30 April to 25 May 2012.

*Mr Lim Tau Kok,
Director of PACC
Ship Managers
congratulating
a cadet for his
achievements*

**WE'RE
HIRING!**



Associate Programme Facilitators / Trainers (Full-Time & Part-Time)

Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI) is dedicated to producing quality seafarers for quality shipping companies as well as providing continued career training for seafaring officers in the region.

It offers maritime pre-sea and post sea courses together with a range of short Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) mandatory and maritime non-mandatory courses.

Over the last three years, WMI has trained nearly 6,000 maritime professionals through its array of formal and short courses.

WMI is in the process of developing a pool of Associate Programme Facilitators / Trainers to assist on a part time basis (both days and/or evenings) on the facilitation of training programmes in Singapore and within the region.

We are currently seeking experienced Master Mariners and maritime professionals with relevant areas of expertise. Sea-going officers with CoC Deck Officer Class 1 & 2 and COC Engine Officer Class 1 & 2 are also welcome to apply.

***Full-Time
Marine Engineer
(Coc 1) Required
To Train In Our Engine
Cadet Training
Courses***

Interested applicants may send your resumes to:

The HR Department
Wavelink Maritime Institute Pte Ltd
75 Jellicoe Road
#05-01, Wavelink Building
Singapore 208738
Fax. 6295 2202
Email : HR@wavelink.com.sg
Website: www.wavelink.com.sg/wmi/

SMOU Mariners' Nite

Back This July!
Bring a friend or two
and join us every
FIRST Friday of the
month for a night of
entertainment.

When:
Every First Friday of the month

Where:
The Lighthouse Bistro

Time:
7.00pm

Members' Special:

1 jug of tiger draft & 1
snack delight

OR

1 bottle of House Wine
(Red) & 1 snack delight

OR

1 jug of ice lemon tea & 1
snack delight

This privilege
is only for SMOU
members who have paid
their membership fees.
Membership cards **must be
presented** upon ordering.
Terms & Conditions apply.



Brand
New Look,

Grand
New Menu

A close-up photograph of a white plate containing spaghetti topped with several large, cooked shrimp. A silver fork is placed on the left side of the plate. The plate is garnished with a small sprig of green herbs and a dusting of black pepper.

50% off*

Every Second À la Carte Item On The Menu!

Walk-in patrons enjoy

30% off the second à la carte!

Lighthouse Bistro reopens with a fresh new look, and even fresher array of new cuisine.

A new culinary experience awaits you. Enjoy Western fusion Asian cuisine. It's a perfect place to chill out - have a meal and drinks with friends, family, colleagues and clients.

*Terms & conditions apply

*Second à la carte item must be the same or of lower value than the first dish.

*For SMOU Members only, upon presentation of membership card when ordering.

Valid for the month of June 2012