

# SMOU



*Years of*

**CARE, FAIR AND GROW**

# CARE, FAIR, GROW

When NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing spoke about Care, Fair and Grow as the three thrusts of the Labour Movement, the message instantly resonated with SMOU.

To Care for workers, to be Fair to them and Grow with them are the Union's fundamental missions. Our priorities, action plans and relationships are centered on these three purposes. In this special section of SeaVoices, we measure our key achievements against the yardstick of Care, Fair and Grow.

We have done much these 65 years; and we will continue to pursue the vision and our calling with tenacity.

Onward Labour Movement; Onward SMOU.

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### Did you know...

...SMOU has its own orchid. Named ***Dendrobium SMOU***, the orchid hybrid was unveiled to commemorate SMOU's 65 years of journey in the maritime industry.

The Dendrobium hybrid, which took four years to cultivate, was chosen as it is a breed that can grow in swampy, desert-like environments or even at altitudes of 10,000 feet. Its highly adaptable characteristic to break out into life wherever it goes describes the nature of SMOU.

For its beauty and uniqueness, Dendrobium SMOU has won several medals at local and international orchid shows such as Silver (Red Ribbon) Award at the "Big Box-SOGA Orchid Appreciation" event and the Bronze Award at the 9<sup>th</sup> China (Sanya) International Orchid Show in 2015. It also clinched the Silver Medal at the 21<sup>st</sup> World Orchid Conference in 2014.

And just like its owner from which it was named after, SMOU is unique and robust. And we're here to stay!



# GS Mary Liew on **SMOU65**

**A**fter leading SMOU as General Secretary for the last three years, Sister Mary Liew now has the honour of ushering the union into celebrating a significant anniversary. The union turns 65 in 2016.

For Sister Mary, it is tremendously liberating knowing that the ground support from the Executive Committee (Exco), General Council (GC), tripartite partners and members is stronger than ever. In an era where disruption is the new norm, the normalcy of having steadfast tripartite relationships is precious and not to be taken for granted.

In an interview with SeaVoices, Sister Mary goes back to the roots of SMOU, revisiting the set of core values that defines the union's identity and acts as a compass pointing the organisation to its destiny. She also shares what could be at stake when SMOU turns 100...35 years from now.

# The Good Soil that enables SMOU to CARE, to be FAIR and to GROW

## A strong sense of purpose and a good set of values

“The past 65 years, we have remained focused on our vision to be a Professional Global Tripartite Maritime Union. We are also very clear on our mission to champion seafarers’ interests and create value to the maritime community and beyond.

We would not have stayed on course if we have not internalised our core values of Professionalism, Innovation, Loyalty, Integrity, Team Spirit and Caring and Sharing.

Without our values, we would be tossed around by different tides. Making decisions and charting the course of SMOU would have been difficult. These core values align our hearts and minds to a greater cause so that in all we do, give, save and invest – they all have a meaning. SMOU is an organisation that cares for our members and we are all united by a common sense of purpose.”

## A team of selfless pioneers

“SMOU did not happen by chance. We are blessed with a very committed group of pioneer leaders who places the union above their own self-interest. I cannot emphasise enough our gratitude to leaders like SMOU President Capt Robin Foo, my mentor Emeritus General Secretary Thomas Tay, Brother Tony Au and our past and present Exco members. They placed their faith in us, patiently mentoring us, bringing us to where we are today.”



SMOU Ordinary General Council Meeting 2016.

## Tripartism that works

“Tripartism, Singapore’s competitive edge, puts us in a podium position. We have worked hard to build and maintain trust, for the benefit of all. For us, tripartism benefits our members in the long run.”



Tripartite partners at the Maritime Manpower Singapore (MMS) Conference in 2015.

## Strengthening the Roots

### Fortify Leadership; Internalise Values

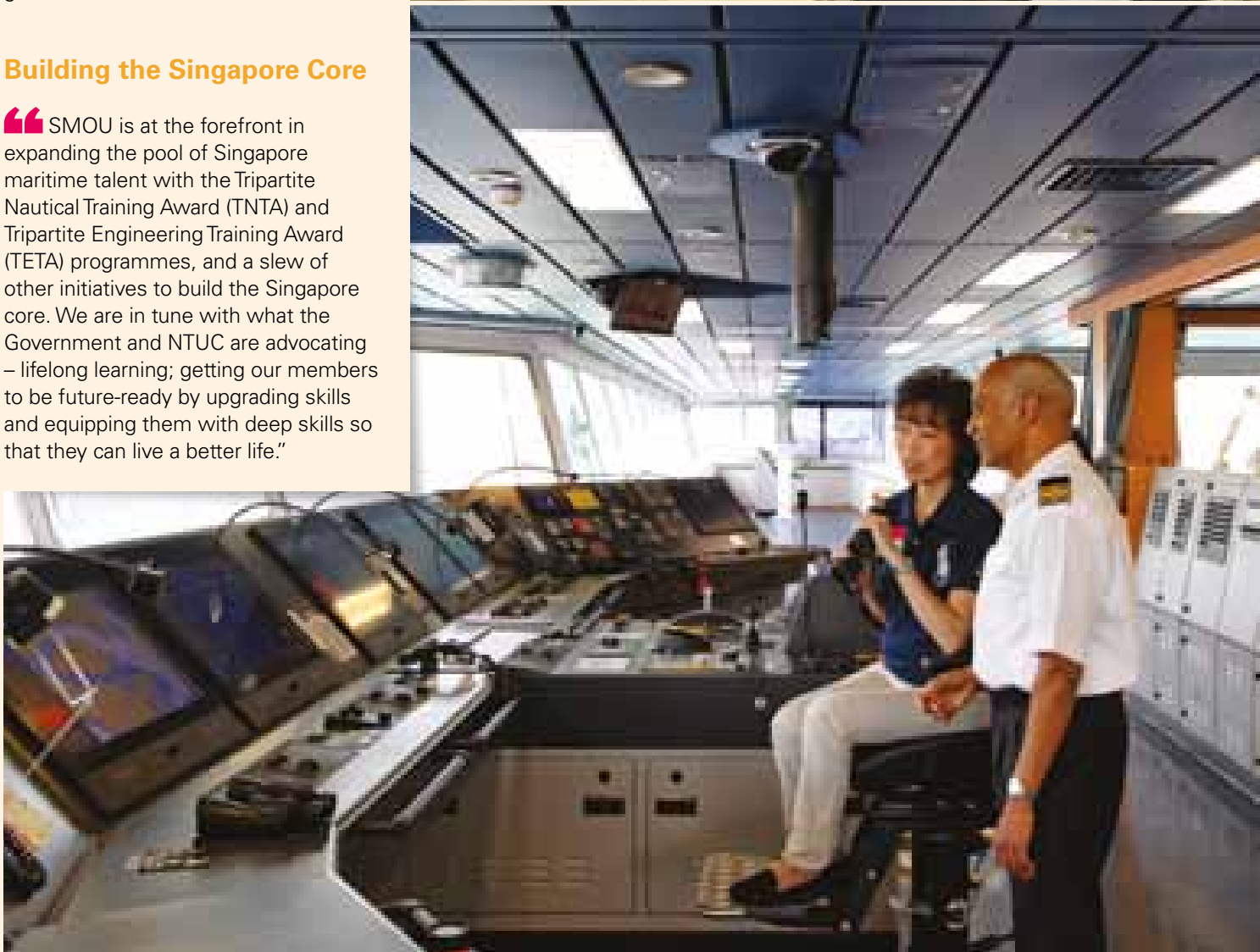
“ Having good, credible leadership that lives by the values and ethos of SMOU is very important. For SMOU to sustain and grow, each of our core values needs to be internalised and lived out as the union’s DNA by Exco, members and staff.

We are always looking to nurture potential leaders, which goes beyond skill training. By engaging the young ones through a series of fireside chats and other events that include their family members, we help them understand more about the union’s involvement in securing their careers. Our cadets need to see SMOU as part of their lives. We are encouraging more of them to serve in Young SMOU and help their fellow colleagues and future generations of seafarers.”



### Building the Singapore Core

“ SMOU is at the forefront in expanding the pool of Singapore maritime talent with the Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) and Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA) programmes, and a slew of other initiatives to build the Singapore core. We are in tune with what the Government and NTUC are advocating – lifelong learning; getting our members to be future-ready by upgrading skills and equipping them with deep skills so that they can live a better life.”



# Next 35 years: SMOU100

## Evolution

“We want to see a new team of leaders with integrity and passion, and of different age groups, serving and bringing the union to the next level. As a forward-looking union, it is our dream to have a futuristic building to house the different facilities to meet the needs of our members and the shipping community. I also believe that Lighthouse Bistro will continue to serve its purpose of bringing the seafaring community together and meeting our members’ social needs.”

*Artist's impression of a futuristic building.*



## Membership

“Our SMOU100 target is to grow our membership to 50,000 members. We also target a growth of 5,000 ships to be covered by Collective Agreements (CA).”



Photo Credit: NTUC

## Prime Concern

“SMOU's priority is to look after the interests of our members, including our senior members, and serve them to the best of our ability. The union should be like a watchman on the wall sounding warning signs to our members and getting them prepared for the tide of disruptions which can endanger their jobs. We are watching closely how technology is going to affect shipping. We cannot rule out autonomous, unmanned ships in the future. New changes bring on new challenges as well as new needs for new skills, and we must prepare our members to be ready for the jobs of tomorrow. Together, we will remain overcomers.”



Artist's impression of an unmanned ship.

## Employability

“The jobs of today may not be the jobs of tomorrow. To build the future of Singapore's Maritime Core, there is a need to develop a sustainable maritime workforce. We must ensure that our CA companies have qualified employees and quality officers. Our members must embrace lifelong learning and ensure that they stay relevant. We will expand our network and collaborate with different organisations to train our youth and instill good leadership skills in them.”



Inaugural Youth Maritime Forum in 2016.

## Addressing Members' Needs

“Members are at the forefront of what we do. We are always looking into their needs and finding ways to better reach out to them. As Singapore is experiencing an aging population, we will also have more elderly members. The SMOU Care Fund is one key initiative set up to help our members, with the message that SMOU will always be there for you.”



*(L-R) SMOU First Vice-President Rahim Jaffar, Treasurer Tan Hung Tat, Young SMOU Chairman Terence Tan and President Capt Robin Foo visit an elderly member in the hospital.*

## What can cause an uproot?

“When we become complacent and think we have arrived; when we maintain the status quo instead of continuing to soar – that mindset and attitude can uproot SMOU.

SMOU is a small union compared to other global unions. To remain relevant to the maritime industry at home and internationally, we need to keep on transforming and rejuvenating ourselves. If we don't innovate and find different ways to improve, we will be left behind.

Division and disunity can also uproot us and this can happen when we stray from our core values. Over the years, we have a close, tight-knitted Exco and GC who see the big picture and care for our members. For that to continue, we need to inculcate values which SMOU upholds to the next generation of leaders.

The failure to appreciate harmonious ties by our partners can have serious repercussions on the good work that SMOU and our tripartite partners have built over the years. We maintain good relationships with shipping companies. Although we may have different views, we agree to disagree and will always aim to work harmoniously together.”

## The 4Ps to Live By

- 1. Passion** – For what you do. At SMOU, helping and touching the lives of our members is our passion. We want our members to have better jobs and lead better lives.
- 2. Professional** – So that people will respect you. Whatever you set out to do, do your best.
- 3. Productive** – Once you are productive, there is worth in the work you do and you value-add to your company.
- 4. Progressive** – Since the union's beginnings, there has been progress for the past 65 years. We take things seriously and do things professionally.

# Everyone Matters

## SMOU Bursary & Scholarship Awards



SMOU member Mohamed Fajari (in shades) with his children Anwar (left), Amin (2nd from left), Munirah (3rd from right) and Saiful (right) at Saiful's wedding.

**S**MOU's Bursary and Scholarship Awards are the touchpoint that best reflects and reinforces the value the union places on education and caring for our members' children.

The union plays a part in ensuring that our members' children are not deterred from continuing their education due to financial difficulties. Thus the SMOU Bursary and Scholarship Awards Presentation was launched. From 1982 till now, more than \$1.5 million has been disbursed, with over 3,500 awards being given out to members' children, which have boosted their confidence.

For over a period of seven years, Mr Mohamed Fajari's four children had benefitted from the bursary awards amounting to more than \$5,000. Back then, Mr Fajari was sailing with Ocean Tankers, a job he held for 20 years. Due to poor health, the grandfather of two had to quit six years ago.

Looking after him is his daughter who remembered attending the SMOU Bursary and Scholarship Awards Presentation with her younger brothers. A recipient of the bursary in the year 2001 and 2003, Munirah recalled the days where her father would talk about his life at sea. Although the loss of vision in one eye and other ailments have taken a toll on her father's health, she remains grateful that SMOU remembers her father and visited him recently.

**“ Growing up, as my father was always sailing and my mother had to take care of my grandmother, the only SMOU event we attended was when my brothers and I received bursaries at the award ceremony. We are thankful to have received over \$5,000 worth of bursaries. The union's support for its members' children is immensely appreciated.**

▲ **Munirah Basri (3<sup>rd</sup> from right), daughter of SMOU member Mr Fajari**

# Spirit of Compassion

## SMOU Care Fund

Championing the spirit of caring and sharing has always been at the heart of SMOU. As the union turns 65, the efforts to improve the lives of members remain unabated. It was noteworthy that at the union's milestone celebration year, SMOU announced the set-up of a \$1.1 million SMOU Care Fund.

The union's increasing compassion for the sick, disabled and deceased members' families led to providing assistance in three areas:

**Transport Assistance** – Up to a maximum of \$120 subsidy per month for eligible needy members who need regular medical check-ups and treatment at hospitals.

**Assistive Devices** – Subsidies of up to 90 per cent to enable members with total and permanent disability, chronic illness causing immobility, or members with disabilities or cognitive impairment to remain mobile and to be able to live independently.

**Bursary Assistance** – \$200 to \$950 for deceased members' children to enable them to continue their education in school, while lightening their financial difficulties.

“**The SMOU Care Fund gives our needy members a helping hand in the event of critical needs. And this fund is especially practical with an ageing population. With age, members may be more susceptible to various health problems that may affect their mobility. The funding will help alleviate their financial burden and give them an assurance that they can still continue to lead a meaningful life,**” said SMOU General Secretary Mary Liew.



NTUC Secretary-General Chan Chun Sing gives a hong bao to wheelchair-bound SMOU member Leo Boon Fui at the SMOU Lunar New Year Luncheon and Hong Bao Presentation.

## Caring for the Community

SMOU is known for its reputation of caring for the community. This has been the case with the union's adopted home, Henderson Home, since 1991. Regular visits to bring joy and offer a helping hand are regularly conducted by union officials. The seniors, together with beneficiaries from other charities, are familiar faces at the union's different events such as the annual Lunar New Year celebrations and Family Day gatherings.

Every Lunar New Year, SMOU also lives out one of their core values of "Care and Share" by reaching out to the residents in Jalan Besar, Care Community Services Society, Hope Community Service Centre and Jamiyah Home for the Aged, a tradition SMOU has kept for more than a decade. The elderly folks enjoy food from Lighthouse Bistro, performances, and receive hong bao and bags of daily necessities.

The spirit of caring not only beats strong till today, it is passed on to the Young SMOU members who take the initiative to organise excursions for the union's adopted home. The Young SMOU showed that their heart is at the right place when visits are made to the less fortunate beyond the shores of Singapore.



*Young SMOU members painting a wall mural at the Hope Children Centre Bukit Baru, Malacca.*



*Guest-of-Honour, Minister for Education (Schools) & Second Minister for Transport Ng Chee Meng with the residents from his constituency, Bright Hill Evergreen Home at the SMOU Family Nite Out at Universal Studios Singapore.*

## Home visits

Apart from home visits to senior members during festive occasions, insurance claims, payouts and grievance cases, the union officials personally drop in on members to ask about their welfare. They also share about the latest union happenings and updates.

This year, Young SMOU took the lead in initiating year-long home visits to members aged 65 years. The team brought more than just hampers; they provided a listening ear as senior members walked down memory lane.



# The Heart of SMOU – Members and their Families

The SMOU family tree – generations of sailing and shore-based members, together with their families. Over the past 65 years, the union has organised a myriad of social activities to strengthen ties between members and within the maritime community. Workshops, one-day shopping trips, annual Lunar New Year Luncheon and Hong Bao Presentations, Family Days, festive celebrations and Mariners' Nite are some examples of how SMOU reaches out. It is akin to a second home, with members knowing that they can be with family and friends all in one setting.

## Improving Skills at Variety of Workshops



Lantern-making workshop conducted by SMOU member Magdalene Boon, the handiworks of the members went towards a good cause.



Members learnt about wealth management, the importance of investment and retirement planning at the Financial Talk.

## Lunar New Year Luncheon & Hong Bao Presentation

Giving cuts across age, race and religion as SMOU annually presents hongbao to members and beneficiaries from different charities and treats them to a good meal to celebrate lunar new year.



Senior SMOU members with Minister for National Development & Second Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong (left photo) and Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) & Second Minister for Defence Ong Ye Kung (right photo).

## SMOU Annual Family Day

Every year, members look forward to the SMOU Family Day gathering at exciting locations such as River Safari, Sentosa, and Universal Studios Singapore.



## Family Connection

Held round the year with different themes like Hi-Tea, National Day, Festive and Year-end Celebration, this is a favourite for members to bond in a fun environment.



## Movie Special for Members, Families and Communities



## Mariners' Nite

A popular event among members young and old, our late member of 19 years, Wong Len Poh looked forward to it even when he was unwell. ***"His happiest moments were spent at Mariners' Nite, where he loved to chit-chat and drink with his friends,"*** shared his wife Mrs Seiko Wong. The once-a-month affair is now held every Friday for members' convenience to enjoy a sumptuous meal with fellow members at Lighthouse Bistro while winding down the week.



# Outreach to Overseas Members

SMOU members of diverse nationalities have seen the “exporting” of Members’ Nite to China, Philippines, Indonesia and most recently, Myanmar. These events go a long way to deepen stronger ties between foreign members and their families, shipping partners and SMOU.



Beijing Nite 2014.



Myanmar Nite 2016.

# SMOU-Wavelink Representative Office in Manila

To reach out to its Filipino members in their home country, SMOU-Wavelink Representative Office was set up in Manila in June 2015. The drop-in centre allows Filipino members, who are also entitled to NTUC Gift and NTUC Income Group Insurance Scheme, to have easier and quicker access to services such as employment advice and Seafarers' Provident Fund (SPF) claims.



SMOU Exco with President Capt Robin Foo, General Secretary (GS) Mary Liew and Emeritus GS Thomas Tay at the opening of the Manila Representative Office.

# A Father's Inspiration, A Daughter's Fulfillment

## MaritimeOne Scholarship

In this time and age, how many of the young can actually say that they owe their career choices to their parents? It was refreshing to hear from Siti Khaliesah that her father, Mansor Marzuki, played a key role in her vocation.

Khaliesah is currently serving her third and final year bond with SMOU. She has indeed come into her own, with much help from SMOU. She was the only one from her cohort studying Maritime Business in Singapore Polytechnic who received

a MaritimeOne Scholarship to embark on a one-year study in Maritime Business and Law at the University of Plymouth.

Khaliesah recalled, "If not for the scholarship, I would have had to defer my studies for two years and save up for the university fees, or the financial burden would have been hard on my father." The scholarship value of \$38,000 more than covered the study fees, textbooks, board and lodging expenses. It was a great relief for Mansor. "I am very appreciative of



*SMOU Emeritus General Secretary Thomas Tay congratulating Khaliesah on her scholarship.*

what the union has done for my family, especially giving an enriching head start to my daughter's career."

Upon completing her studies at the University of Plymouth, Khaliesah started working with SMOU in August 2014. Her stint with the union has exposed her to the good work that SMOU does for its members.

For Khaliesah, her work in the union involves assisting in settling grievance cases, where she sees how hard SMOU fought on behalf of members for compensation. In the employment register, she matches jobs for unemployed members and witnesses successful cases. Khaliesah is given the opportunity to sit in at Collective Agreement (CA) negotiation meetings. In the membership department, Khaliesah has learnt more about the benefits given to members, from training subsidies, bursaries and back to school vouchers, to discounts at Lighthouse Bistro. Not only is she involved in Young SMOU events, she also serves on the Young NTUC committee.

"Given the great exposure of working in the union, I have a better understanding and deeper appreciation of the extent the union goes through to give a helping hand to our members."

Asked what her plans are for the future after her bond with SMOU ends, Khaliesah says she hopes to further her studies in the same field. The prospects are looking good for one who first went into this field under the encouragement of her father.



# Ship Visits

The SMOU Industrial Relations (IR) team faithfully makes regular ship visits to Collective Agreement (CA) vessels that anchor in Singapore waters. During such visits, the team takes the time to touch base with the crew – to update them with home front news and on union matters; to check that their needs and welfare are taken care of; and always bringing greetings and souvenirs from the union.



Every year since 2010, when the Day of the Seafarer was designated by International Maritime Organization (IMO) and celebrated all over the world, SMOU would present hampers not only to representatives from the shipping industry but also make it a point to personally deliver them to CA ships that are docked in Singapore ports.



## Did you know...

... 1981 saw a breakthrough in tripartism, when for the first time, some 200 people from shipping companies, officials from the National Maritime Board (now known as the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore), Marine Department, NTUC and SMOU had a watershed seminar onboard the cruise ship, MV Centaur. The milestone event with the theme "Cruising Towards A New Maritime Industrial Relations Climate" was organised by SMOU at the cost of \$60,000.

The historic seminar laid a strong foundation for the symbiotic tripartite alliance to flourish between union, management and government.

# Champion for Members' Rights

**T**wo years have passed since Capt Ian Chan's demise, but there has not been a single day when his family has not thought about him.

"He was my soulmate," his widow said quietly. "And I miss him."

Currently unemployed, Mrs Chan quit work after giving birth to their second son, Elliot. Elliot was 11 years old and his older brother Ethan was 17 when they received the devastating news in November 2014 that their father had passed away from a heart attack while at sea. At 52 years old, he was the family's sole breadwinner.

Outgoing and compassionate, Capt Chan had a good rapport with his staff and emailed his wife daily when he was out at sea. Whenever he returned home, he would make it a tradition to eat with his family on Sundays and his wife's family on Saturdays. He would also take the time to catch up on reading SeaVoices. "SMOU meant a lot to him," Mrs Chan said.

A fitness fanatic, Capt Chan had no prior record of heart problems, so his sudden collapse on the ship bridge came as a shock. Despite him being pronounced dead at 5am, Mrs Chan only received the news at 11am. It

was a delay made all the more upsetting when her husband's company turned down her request for compensation.

Since Capt Chan had been a SMOU member for 27 years, union representatives attended his wake to pay respects, whereupon they came to know of the family's predicament. As Capt Chan had been onboard a vessel which had a Collective Agreement with the Hong Kong Unions, SMOU roped in the Merchant Navy Officers' Guild – Hong Kong (MNOG-HK) to help Mrs Chan appeal to the company for compensation. Although the company offered her US\$40,000, SMOU assisted Mrs Chan to appeal for a higher amount, on account of Capt Chan

*SMOU President Capt Robin Foo, GS Mary Liew and First Vice-President Rahim Jaffer paid a visit to Mrs Chan to find out how she was doing.*



having worked for the company for 15 years.

Through SMOU's intervention, Capt Chan's family eventually received US\$200,000 in August 2015. The huge difference meant a great deal to Mrs Chan, who is single-handedly raising her two sons now. "I'm touched that SMOU fought hard on our behalf. In helping me to settle this issue, the union has given me peace of mind," she said gratefully. "SMOU took care of all details. I didn't even need to fly to Hong Kong to do the paperwork."

Capt Chan's death has not stopped her from encouraging her sons to become seafarers. "I will support them in whatever they wish to do. Besides, seafaring is a good and honest career."

SMOU would like to thank MNOG-HK for their help and support in solidarity to secure rightful compensation for our late member's family.



*The late Capt Chan (in red) with his wife beside him on the cover of a 2011 issue of SeaVoices.*



# Face-to-face with Gwee, IR Senior Manager

**P**eacemaker. Union Advocate. Champion of seafarers' welfare – 36-year-old Mr Gwee Guo Duan, better known as Gwee, plays these roles and more as SMOU Industrial Relations (IR) Senior Manager.

Some 11 years ago, the fire for trade unionism was ignited in him when SMOU gave him the opportunity to be an intern and he continued to work with the union after he graduated with a Diploma in Maritime Transportation.

One person at the union who left a deep impact on Gwee is the late Mr Kumaran Kunjoo, who was working as an SMOU IR Consultant till he passed away at the age of 77.

"As my mentor, Mr Kumaran had imparted many principles, one of which is fighting for seafarers' rights to ensure decent and fair working conditions for all. He was also a walking IR encyclopedia," Gwee told SeaVoices.

"My job never has a dull moment," he added. "Everyday is a brand new day. There could be 10 grievance cases with 10 different ways of resolving."

Here, Gwee sheds light on three of his most memorable IR cases.

## **MV Lady Belinda**

MV Lady Belinda, a North Korean flagged bulk carrier, had 23 Indian crew stranded onboard in Singapore waters for three months. The vessel arrived under tow on 14 January 2008 and was detained and declared unseaworthy by Singapore's port authority. Upon receiving their call for help, SMOU visited the downtrodden crew bringing fresh water, food and most of all, hope.

SMOU successfully recovered a total of US\$114,000 of unpaid wages for the seafarers and got the Greek ship owner to pay for the repatriation.

"The case of Lady Belinda left a deep



Gwee (centre) with IR Assistant Manager Terence Tan (right) handling a grievance case.

impression on me. It was my first exposure to abandoned seafarers and witnessing a payout. I didn't realise until then that seafarers could be subjected to such unscrupulous exploitation and work in such unsafe working conditions. It made me more determined to commit myself to industrial relations."

## **MV Ao Hong Ma**

The Hong Kong flagged Bulk Carrier MV Ao Hong Ma was arrested on 30 January 2016 by the Singapore Court. As of March 2016, 42 crew had outstanding wages of some 11 months, totaling US\$620,000 owed to them. SMOU filed a caveat to ensure that when the ship is sold, the seafarers' claims are covered.

When SMOU visited the crew in May and delivered a good spread of food prepared by Lighthouse Bistro, the Chinese crew was touched by the kindness. Among them was Oiler Cao Yefeng who had a special reason to be repatriated – fast.

"When we heard that Cao Yefeng was getting married on 6 June 2016 – a date planned one year ago, we knew we had to step in to help. We pushed really hard for him and successfully got the Sheriff's approval to repatriate Cao on an urgent basis. Cao was very grateful that SMOU went the extra mile to see to it that he got home in time for his wedding," said Gwee.

"To me personally, this case was special because we made a difference in the most important event in a person's life."

## **A "Heartbreaking" Case**

Vessel X was about to be arrested the next day. The crew had filed their grievances – there were unpaid salaries and the vessel was in a dismal condition.

"I saw a big hole at the back of the vessel. There was no air conditioner and the seafarers slept along the corridor because the rooms were too stuffy," Gwee recalled how shocked he was.

However, before the Sheriff of the Supreme Court could go on board to issue the order for arrest, Gwee was told that Vessel X had sailed off the night before.

"Apparently, someone illusive by the name of Mr Ali had promised the seafarers that they would get their wages if they would leave Singapore immediately and sail off to Batam. We didn't receive any more news from them. They disappeared into thin air. It was a heartbreaking case for me. We were so close to having the ship arrested and the crew repatriated with paid wages," said Gwee.

"It is highly likely that the crew was conned. If only they knew their rights. If only they had stayed on for one more night..."



The crew of Golden Trader with SMOU President Capt Robin Foo (in a white and black ensemble).



**“Singapore has been and will continue to be a major port for ship arrests. Due to its efficient and transparent legal system, strong tripartism and our reputation for fair play, it is not uncommon for ships to be arrested in Singapore,”** said Gwee.

**“SMOU100 – we want a stronger union and continue to expand the role beyond Collective Agreements. We want to really touch seafarers’ lives on all levels.”**



(L-R) Gwee, SMOU President Capt Robin Foo, the late Mr Kumaran, WMI Operations Executive Kevin Loh and Emeritus General Secretary Thomas Tay.



*“My children can name the different types of vessels, for example, they can point out which is a container vessel or tanker, and they know different parts of the ship. They are curious about what their daddy does for a living.”*

# S\$1.5m Contribution to Shipping Companies

This year, the shipping community faced an economic uncertainty with the oversupply of vessels and low freight rates. Recognising the challenges, the SMOU Exco responded with a bold and generous move to approve a one-off contribution of S\$1.5 million to the maritime community. A sum of S\$1,000 per vessel was given to shipping companies with SMOU Collective Agreements (CA) to increase training and ensure that union members continue to receive adequate welfare on board during these uncertain times.

During a recent SMOU Fundraising event, cheques were presented to six different companies acknowledging their utilisation of the funds.



SMOU Emeritus General Secretary Thomas Tay presenting the cheque to one of the companies, Ocean Tankers Crewing Manager William Lai.



**“The S\$1.5million contribution from SMOU sends a positive signal that the union is working in close partnership with the community to ride through upcoming challenges. The shipping community is facing strong headwinds, but if we collectively pull together in the same direction, we can overcome them,”** said Ms Tan Beng Tee, Assistant Chief Executive (Development) of Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.



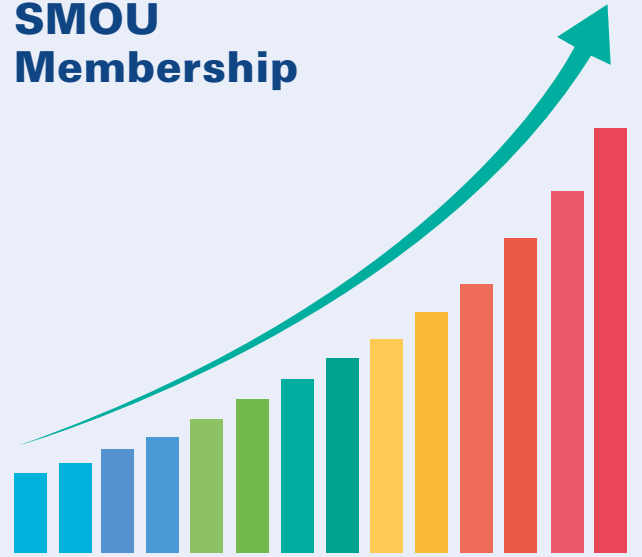
**“I think it’s very encouraging for shipping owners that SMOU recognises the bad market situation. It is a positive step that’s very much appreciated,”** said Mr Esben Poulsson, President of Singapore Shipping Association.

# Growing Leaps and Bounds

## Growing Leaps and Bounds

SMOU has come a long way since it first operated out of a tiny one-room office on Jalan Sultan in 1951. Then, SMOU was known as Malay Marine Officers' Association (MMAOA). To better reflect a multi-racial representation in the mid 50s, the MMAOA was renamed the Malay-asian Ship Officers' Union (MSOU) in 1955. On 22 August 1972, the MSOU was renamed the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union (SMOU). The new name reflected a shift towards progress as a union of seafaring officers, and progress in the industrial relations scene.

## SMOU Membership



**SMOU has been experiencing a steady growth from 11 members in 1951, to 30,000 members and growing.**

## Grooming and Reaching out to Youth

Young SMOU was established in 2005 to represent seafarers aged 35 and below. The union connects to the youth through various creative and engaging activities such as Fireside Chats with senior union leaders such as President Capt Robin Foo, General Secretary (GS) Mary Liew and Emeritus GS Thomas Tay; Young Mariners' Nite; Young Mariners' Networking sessions; educational talks on topics such as financial management and visits to vessels; casual fun events such as archery tag and futsal; social outreach events to the elderly such as excursions to public parks and participation in organising union events such as bowling championships and festive celebrations.



*Fireside Chat with SMOU senior leaders.*

*Young Mariners' Networking 2015 – students from the TNTA, Institute of Technical Education, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Singapore Maritime Academy building their own ships.*



# Making Waves in Different Ways

## A Co-op is Born

**Wavelink Co-operative Ltd** was jointly founded by SMOU and NTUC on 29 June 2000, anchored on a shared vision to venture into new frontiers and business opportunities, to provide higher quality of life for members through a cluster of companies that include training institution – Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI); food and beverage – Lighthouse Bistro (LHB); and funds administration - Wavelink Thrift.



## Wavelink Maritime Institute (WMI)

WMI was formed in 2007 and is dedicated to providing quality maritime education, training and consultancy services for both local and international maritime community especially companies with Collective Agreements (CA) with SMOU. WMI provides quality training services to better enhance and further strengthen the competencies of seafaring officers to meet the demands and challenges of the international maritime environment.

WMI has been providing the training for 12 cohorts of Tripartite Nautical Training Fund (TNTA) and 2 cohorts of Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA) cadets thus far. It runs 30 approved courses under SkillsFuture Credit, a scheme launched by the government to encourage lifelong learning and individual ownership of skills development (members get up to S\$500 in subsidies).



## Lighthouse Bistro (LHB)

Since 2003, LHB has been the guiding light to seafarers and the shipping community. It is the perfect meeting place to catch up over drinks, have a meal with friends, family, colleagues or clients. LHB has often been the venue for many union-organised events from Lunar New Year celebrations that reach out to the communities, to networking events with shipping companies, young cadets, and special events for members. The Bistro has cooked up a storm to feed hungry, stranded seafarers and seafarers onboard ships during festive seasons and other occasions as well.



Members celebrating this year's Valentine's Day at LHB.



**Wavelink Thrift**

Wavelink Thrift Pte Ltd is responsible for the administration of the Seafarers' Provident Fund (SPF), Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF) and Seafarers' Medical Scheme (SMS). The SPF, SMTF and SMS are schemes that enhance the welfare of seafaring members onboard SMOU CA vessels.

**SPF**  
 No of members claimed  
**9,080**

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Amount paid  
**S\$13,969,400**

**SMS**  
 More than **7,000** Officers and  
 their dependents covered

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Medical claims amounting up to  
**US\$132,000** since 2007

**Singapore Maritime Training Fund (SMTF)**

Launched in 2006, the SMTF is a collaboration between SMOU, maritime authorities and shipping employers with CAs to train quality and qualified officers for Singapore flagged vessels. Some S\$9.2 million has been spent on training over 8,900 cadets and officers.

The SMTF aims to help the members, serving onboard vessels covered by SMOU CA, to upgrade their skills while attracting new entrants into the maritime industry. It provides collective and cost-effective training for seafaring officers thereby improving their employability and also the competitive edge of their shipping employers.

In 2007, SMOU and Wavelink embarked on the first CadetsPlus training journey to help equip fresh graduates from Maritime Colleges or Universities, with the knowledge and skills required in international shipping. OfficersPlus programme started shortly after calls from the industry to look into officers' training. Both programmes have spanned over 14 cities across 5 countries including China, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Singapore.

There are over 20 WMI approved programmes that are applicable for SMTF. The TNTA and TETA are programmes that have also tapped on the SMTF.



**SMTF**  
**S\$9.2 million**  
 spent on training over  
**8,900**  
 cadets and officers



A CadetsPlus Programme organised in Xiamen, China in 2015.

# Building The Singapore Core

## Wavelink Maritime Simulation Centre (WMSC)

SMOU is the first local maritime union to own a maritime simulation centre. The WMSC, which costs approximately S\$4 million, is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities that include the latest 240 degree Full Mission Bridge Simulator, Engine Room Simulator, Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) and Liquid Cargo Handling Simulator (LCHS). It is part of the union's continual and collective effort to develop the Singapore Maritime Core.

Located at the Devan Nair Institute for Employment and Employability (e2i), the WMSC houses four simulation systems in one location.

WMSC is one of the key components in enhancing the training of the cadets and officers. Among those who would benefit from the facilities are Tripartite Nautical Training Award and Tripartite Engineering Training Award cadets, and shipping companies which have Collective Agreements (CA) with SMOU.

## Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA)

In 2010, the TNTA programme was introduced to strengthen the



*Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong experiencing the state-of-the-art facilities.*

Singapore Maritime Core while addressing the manpower shortage. It was a ground-breaking programme, jointly initiated by SMOU, Workforce Singapore (WSG) and NTUC's e2i to train Singaporeans for the Certificate of Competency (CoC) Class 3 qualifications issued by Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), thereby allowing the trainees to pursue a nautical career at sea as nautical deck officers.

Supported by MPA, Singapore Shipping Association (SSA) and various shipping companies, TNTA has since been awarded to more than 250 Singaporeans and involves some 13 shipping companies which offer the cadets shipboard placements, training allowances and long-term jobs. To date, a total of S\$28.6 million



*Each cohort of TNTA and TETA cadets receive training at the Wavelink Maritime Simulation Centre.*

has been invested into training the cadets.

It has seen Singaporeans from all walks of life being given a second chance to pursue a seafaring career that they would otherwise be unable to achieve since 90% of the course fees are sponsored by WSG, e2i and SMOU. During the course of training, cadets are given a monthly allowance of up to S\$1,400 each during the 3-year training course.

## Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA)

The TETA programme, initiated by SMOU, WSG, e2i and supported by MPA, SSA, and shipping companies, was unveiled on 3 May 2016. The S\$1.2 million programme aims to resolve the shortage of local marine engineers. The first TETA cohort had eight cadets employed by six shipping companies. The programme is now into its second run to train more Singaporean marine engineers.



*Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say and tripartite partners with the cadets from TNTA Cohort 11 (last row) and TETA Cohort 1 (front row).*

# The TNTA Experience? Priceless!

## TNTA Graduate

**R**aja Muhamad Asyraf Raja Muhamad Amiruddin grew up hearing the exciting adventures of his father's seafaring experience. His father's stories and fascination for the sea rubbed off on Asyraf, so it was the natural thing to do when he applied for Nautical Studies after his 'O' Levels. However, his dream was dashed when he could not meet the course requirements; and he ended up graduating with a diploma in Bio Technology and was offered a laboratory assistant job.

His heart was still captivated by the sea. That was when his friend told him about the Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA) programme that enables Singaporeans to be trained as Certificate of Competency (CoC) Class 3 Deck Officers to join the maritime industry.

Realising that his seafaring aspiration could finally be fulfilled, Asyraf took up a few jobs, such as a pizza delivery and tuition, to save up for the 10 per cent of the TNTA course fees. The remaining fees were funded by Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), Employment and Employability Institute (e2i) and SMOU under the programme.

Asyraf's hard work to make his dream a reality paid off. His love and passion for seafaring saw him achieving 'Top Cadet Award' during his pre-sea graduation. He fulfilled 18 months of sea training.

After 3½ years, Asyraf graduated from TNTA Cohort 4 and is now 3<sup>rd</sup> officer, employed by Maersk Tankers.

Asyraf currently earns between US\$3,000 to US\$4,000 when he is sailing. With this, he does not need to find supplemental income anymore, and can spend quality time with his family.

Through the challenges and exposure that he gained from the TNTA programme, he shares that he has acquired leadership skills and a good set of seafaring knowledge. His focus now is to accumulate more experience to enable him to be a competent and skilled officer.

When asked to sum up his TNTA journey, he says, "Before you go to sea, what you expect will be different from what you experience. However, the experience you get will be priceless."



*Asyraf receiving his Top Cadet Award from e2i CEO Gilbert Tan.*



*Asyraf (3<sup>rd</sup> from left) celebrating his birthday on his first voyage.*

*As a 3<sup>rd</sup> Officer, all life-saving appliances are under his care. Asyraf is seen lowering the rescue boat to the water for testing.*



# Spunky Lady Cadet

## TNTA Cadet

At a Mendaki job fair in 2014, a lady approached a Captain and asked if a seafaring career was just for men. When she said “I am a girl...”, the Captain’s two-letter word reply made her rethink the limitations she had set for herself. That was the start of Nurfaezah Ithnin’s journey into a career at sea. Fae, as she is better known, made the career switch from bartending after doing extensive research on the maritime industry. She decided that it was a career she really wanted to embark on, and signed up for Tripartite Nautical Training Award (TNTA).

Fast forward, two years later, Fae could not have imagined how far she has come, as she stood before a crowd of Pacific International Lines Pte Ltd (PIL) officers and staff to make a speech at the company dinner. Having completed her 18 months of sailing experience with PIL, Fae is into her final phase of TNTA programme.

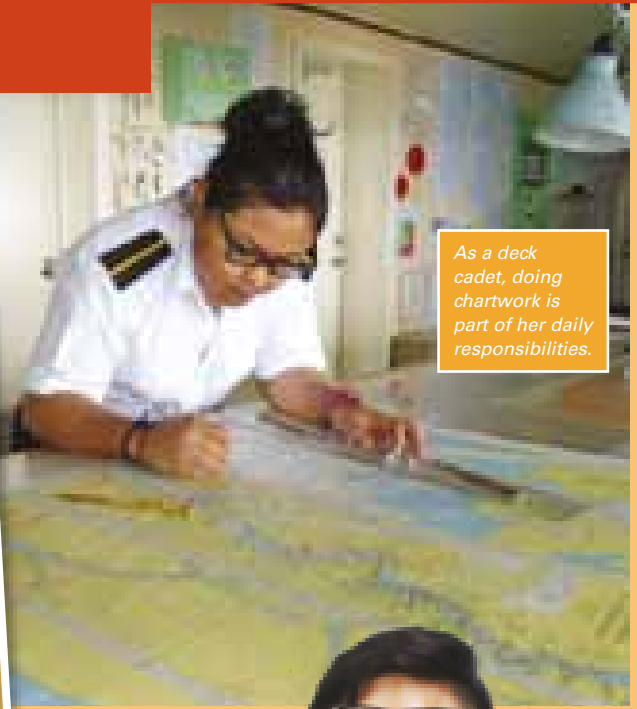
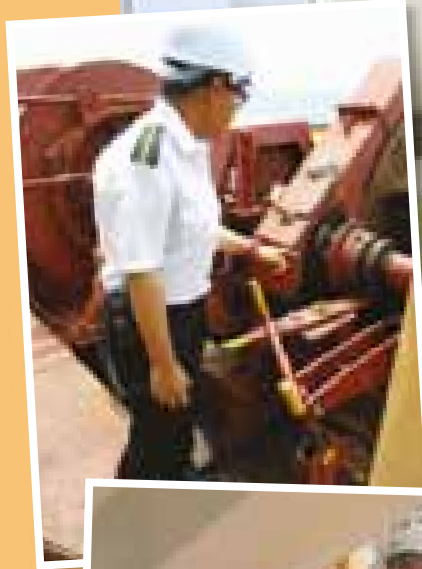
Fae shared what stood out most during her sailing stint. It was the camaraderie among the crew members, who came from different cultures and background, that broadened her perspective in life. “Not only do we give each other mutual respect and understanding, we also give each other support during the hard times. I remembered how difficult it was to be sailing during the Hari Raya period, because the absence of my family was magnified and I missed them a lot. It is during these moments I appreciate the crew’s efforts in organising a celebration for the Muslims onboard and that helped me cope.”

Credit should be given to Wavelink Maritime Institute for thinking through the structure of the TNTA programme which included practical aspects during the pre-sea training, such as simulator training at the state-of-the-art Wavelink

Maritime Simulation Centre. This gave her the confidence to steer an actual ship when given the opportunity. Her 18 months sea experience helped her acquire the necessary skills and knowledge working onboard.

Despite the challenging life of a seafarer for a female, Fae has not regretted this bold move she made two years ago. “My dream is to become a captain of a ship. It is uncommon for females to choose this industry, but with the encouragement from my parents and friends plus my determination to gain as much experience as possible while honing my seafaring skills, I can do it.”

Perhaps some of you are wondering what was this two-letter word a Captain uttered to Fae that changed her life – it was “So?”



*As a deck cadet, doing chartwork is part of her daily responsibilities.*



# The Man Who Didn't Give Up

## TETA Cadet

**M**anogaran Harishankaran belongs to the first cohort of eight cadets of the newly launched Tripartite Engineering Training Award (TETA) programme.

Harish didn't enter into the TETA programme by chance. The 31-year-old diploma holder in Aerospace Technology has always had his aspirations on a career at sea. When he was in his teens, he wanted to take Nautical Studies in Singapore Polytechnic, but was unsuccessful. After serving his National Service, he tried to apply for maritime courses through OneMaritime portal, but that was not to be.

Despite the series of rejections, he never gave up. He became more determined after working with a few shipping companies during his stint in China as a contract Personnel and Logistics Coordinator when he was in his twenties. When his contract work ended, he returned to Singapore and helped out with his family-run private bus company as a bus driver.

In the meantime, his passion for the sea continued to be fanned by some of his friends and a good friend's uncle who shared with him their seafaring experiences. He heard about the TETA programme, applied for it, and eventually was among the eight successful candidates. As one of the more matured students of the TETA programme, Harish feels that the technical skills he acquired in his earlier years as a Personnel and Logistics Coordinator did not go to waste. He sees this career choice as an integration of passion. The information and knowledge that he's going to acquire will enhance his ability to achieve a career as a seafarer.

Since the commencement of the TETA programme more than six months ago, it has been an educational journey. According to Harish, "the best moments are the times when the knowledge we get from our trainers

*Harish receiving his epaulets from Manpower Minister Lim Swee Say and APL Head of Global Technical Services ShajThayil at the TETA Investiture Ceremony.*

are applied and we actually understand how to use it better."

On his progress so far, he shared: "I could not have gotten this far without my TETA classmates. From constructive feedback, we help one another to bring out the best in each of us. My family is also a key pillar of support."

Harish hopes to learn more from the experienced pioneer seafarers for his personal development and aspires to be an all-rounded Chief Engineer one day. He is employed by APL.



*Harish (back row, right) with his classmates and trainer at a workshop.*

# SMOU Appointed Surrogate Employer



Members taking the Emergency, Occupational Safety and Survival Functions Training (EOSST) Course as part of their revalidation.

When the International Maritime Organization (IMO) announced updates to the new regulations that all seafarers are to undergo revalidation of their certificates in order to meet the international Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) requirements by December 2016, SMOU members with no employer sponsorship have to pay the full course fees out of their own pockets, which can cost them up to S\$6,000, when they undergo revalidation.

SMOU swung into action and after much efforts, the union was appointed as a surrogate employer by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA), assisting our members to apply for 70% funding from MPA's Maritime Cluster Fund (MCF) as well as training subsidies from SMOU.

Since September 2015, more than 350 applications have been made to the MCF with SMOU as a surrogate employer and a total of \$250,000 has been claimed. SMOU would like to thank MPA for their help and endorsement of the union as a surrogate employer so that our members can receive these subsidies.



**“ I am happy and grateful to SMOU for this savings as it enables me to continue working, and it can go towards my son's education. My revalidated certificates have helped me get a new job.**

▲ SMOU Member **Thaung Htut Maung** (left) and his wife

# Growing In Relationships

## International Affiliations



*ILO Director-General Guy Ryder (4<sup>th</sup> from left) together with the Singapore tripartite partners at the 105<sup>th</sup> International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland.*

**A**s a maritime officers' union, SMOU's vision goes beyond the shores of Singapore. The union actively collaborates with global partners to protect the employment rights of members and to enhance their quality of life through the union's many welfare initiatives.

Globally, SMOU works in partnership with international unions and affiliates including the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), International Federation of Ship Master Association (IFSMA) and Nautilus Federation (NF).

SMOU General Secretary Mary Liew was the first woman from South East Asia to be elected to serve on the ITF Executive Board and was re-elected in 2014. At the 103<sup>rd</sup> Session of the International Labour Conference in June 2014, she was elected Deputy Member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Governing Body – Workers' Group for a three-year term till 2017.



*Ms Liew at the 2016 International Labour Conference organised by International Labour Organization.*

# Messages from Our Key Tripartite Partners

**“ SMOU has been instrumental in the development of Singapore as a leading international maritime centre. For many years, the union has tirelessly championed members’ welfare and supported the aspirations of Maritime Singapore. Kudos to SMOU for continuing to provide training for seafaring officers, to better prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow.”**



**Mr Chan Chun Sing**

Minister in Prime Minister's Office,  
Government Whip and Secretary-General,  
National Trades Union Congress



**“ My deepest impression of SMOU is the passion, commitment and determination of the union leadership in serving the interests of its members. SMOU is always coming up with new initiatives to take better care of the employment, employability and well-being of the members. It**

**has established itself not only as a leading union here in Singapore, but also a well respected advocate of workers' rights out there in the global union community.”**

**Mr Lim Swee Say**  
Minister for Manpower



**“ SMOU plays an important role in the development of our maritime sector, including helping the sector navigate the current downturn and contributing to its manpower development needs.**

**As one of its oldest affiliates, SMOU has also been a pillar of strength for NTUC, always supporting many of its initiatives to enhance the lives of our workers.”**

**Madam Halimah Jacob**  
Speaker of Parliament

**“ I am impressed by the dedication and passion of the officers at SMOU in serving their members from improving employment conditions to professional development and welfare benefits. The journey that SMOU has taken over these 65 years is intertwined with that of Singapore as a maritime nation.”**



**Mr Andrew Tan**  
Chief Executive, Maritime and  
Port Authority of Singapore

**“ SMOU plays a pivotal role in sustaining and supporting the expertise and manpower of the maritime industry. We are happy to see SMOU's proactive initiation with the launch of Tripartite Engineering Training Award and Tripartite Nautical Training Award programmes, to address the shortage of marine engineers and officers. We would also like to applaud SMOU for their inclusive management in soliciting and working alongside tripartite partners, the regional and international maritime community.”**



**Mr Esben Poulsson**  
President, Singapore Shipping Association



**“ I hope SMOU will continue to be at the forefront of advancing seafarers’ interest and support for the continued development in the area of skills and competence enhancements. Be**

**bold in initiating innovations that will push Singapore to be always ready to meet the ever changing competitive landscape of shipping.”**

**Capt Francis Joseph**

Chairman, Singapore Maritime Employers Federation



**“ SMOU has longstanding, highly professional and committed trade union leadership of the highest calibre. That leadership continues to be re-asserted through the ongoing development of committed trade union activists. They have also been in the forefront in their support of diversity, particularly through gender balance in their on-going**

**development of their leadership.”**

**Mr Paddy Crumlin**

President, International Transport Workers’ Federation and National Secretary, Maritime Union of Australia

**“ SMOU joined the ITF Family in 1971 and has since impressed the trade union movement with its passion, astuteness and solidarity with international maritime workers. It is a pillar of integrity, hope and expertise through which the Labour Movement can depend on for commitment and pragmatism to protecting workers’ rights.”**



**Mr Stephen Cotton**

General Secretary, International Transport Workers’ Federation

**“ As strongly united partners in the Asian region, JSU and SMOU have built a relationship of trust through the Asian Seafarers’ Summit Meeting, the Working Group on Asian Seafarers’ Summit Meeting, and the JSU/SMOU/SOS Summit Meeting launched several years ago. It is SMOU’s powerful leadership and responsibility as Asia’s major seafarers’ union that allows us to establish the best circumstances for seafarers; JSU is greatly respectful of such leadership and responsibility of SMOU.”**



**Mr Yasumi Morita**

Chairman, Asia Pacific Seafarers’ Regional Committee and President, All Japan Seamen’s Union

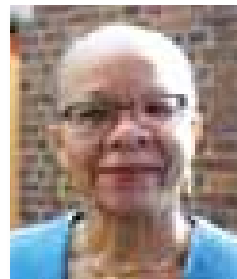


**“ We value our cooperation and your commitment to tripartism and collective bargaining and support SMOU in your endeavours to enhance training and employment opportunities for**

**Singaporeans on Singapore registered vessels. We must continue to work together as we have under SMOU’s inspirational leadership.”**

**Mr Mark Dickinson**

Director, Nautilus Federation and General Secretary, Nautilus International



**“ In working closely with SMOU, I’ve witnessed firsthand their contributions to the Seafarers’ Group in the International Labour Organization during negotiating years of this landmark instrument. SMOU’s work to support tripartite partnership enabling**

**Singapore to ratify the MLC 2006 on 11 June 2011 ensured that their country was among the first 30 countries and also the first country in Asia to bring the Convention into force on 20 August 2013.”**

**Dr Cleopatra Doumbia-Henry**

President, World Maritime University and Former Director, International Labour Organization (International Labour Standards Department)