

Gist of message from JSU's president

Talks concluded on revision of labor agreement for FY2016

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) recently held its first central collective bargaining session in four years, asking for a revision in the number of days off that JSU members can take annually and the establishment of a dedicated council for discussing issues relating to the age-based mandatory retirement system, both of which had been demanded by the industry.

As for wage-related requests, negotiations are being held with the divisions responsible for relations between labor and management, which are hoped to be concluded by the deadline. As for the revision of the number of days that member seafarers can take off annually, a new national holiday, Mountain Day, was established as the National Holiday Act had been partially revised. As a consequence, we requested the number that was agreed upon in 1999 to be reviewed.

The Japanese Shipowners' Association (JSA) understood our request to revise the number of days off that JSU-affiliated seafarers can take annually, but there was a gap between the parties in coming up with a new number of days off, keeping us from reaching agreement in our negotiations.

As a result of our earnest efforts in holding discussions to reach a con-

clusion, the parties at last came to an agreement on a new number of days off and an improvement in the basic rates that are used to calculate wages for seafarers who are required to get on duty on their days off.

Meanwhile, the government will in 2018 begin gradually raising the age for the start of retirement pensions, and it is expected the system will generate a blank period between when seafarers retire from their careers and when they begin receiving retirement benefits. As such, we demanded a dedicated council to be set up to begin discussing specific measures immediately to fill the gap.

In respect to this issue relating to the retirement system, we had believed that it was necessary to have an opportunity to fully exchange views to ensure consistency between labor agreements and systems, at a time when ways of thinking about working are being diversified over time. With this belief, we requested a dedicated organization to be established, and for this we obtained consent from the JSA.

I strongly believe the council will begin holding discussions on specific actions.

We have reached a conclusion at this time, and it is thanks to the ongoing favorable relations between labor and management.

I hope labor and management



Above: JSU President Yasumi Morita (R), Chairman Kazuyuki Oda (C) and Chairman Yoshiyuki Ikeya (L).

Right: President Morita addresses the assembly of the central collective bargaining session.



relations, which were enhanced through the recent central collective bargaining session, will grow stronger in the future. I am once again grateful to the JSA for making tremendous efforts during this year's spring wage negotiations.

DETAILS OF AGREEMENT (for Japanese Member Seafarers)

(1) **Article 1** (effective period and basic labor period)

This agreement is effective from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.

(2) **Article 80** (number of days off)

The number of days off that JSU member seafarers can take from their annual service terms is 121 days.

(3) **Article 81** (holiday work allowances)

Holiday work allowances are paid to seafarers working onboard vessels every month, which are equivalent in amount to 1/162.5 of the basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements that are multiplied by 30.

(4) **Article 124** (overtime entitlements)

(II) **Overtime entitlements per hour** are as follows:

(i) Working days: 1.3/162.5 of the

basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements.

(ii) Days off: 1.5/162.5 of the basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements

(5) **Article 125** (night differentials)

Night differentials are 0.5/162.5 of the basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements

(6) **Article 135** (wages for riggers)

(IV) **Overtime entitlements**

(i) Working days: 1.3/162.5 of the total of basic salaries and rigger benefits are paid per hour of overtime work.

(ii) Days off: 1.5/162.5 of the total of basic salaries and rigger benefits are

paid per hour of overtime work (only when they are engaged in rigging work in Japan).

(V) **Night differentials**

0.5/162.5 of the total of basic salaries and rigger benefits are paid per hour of overtime work are paid per hour from 18:00 to 6:00.

(7)(XXV) **Confirmations and understandings**

(i) **Article 81, Section 1, No. 2** (holiday work allowances): 1/162.5 of the basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements that are multiplied by 31 are paid monthly.

(ii) **Article 124** (overtime entitlements): 1.3/162.5 of the basic rates for calculat-

ing overtime entitlements that are multiplied by 15 are paid monthly

(iii) **Article 125** (night differentials): 0.5/162.5 of the basic rates for calculating overtime entitlements that are multiplied by 15 are paid monthly.

Others

(i) A dedicated council for the age-based mandatory retirement system will be set up to hold discussions to keep JSU member seafarers from having to face periods when they would not receive salaries or retirement pensions when the government of Japan raises the age for the start of retirement pensions.

The relevant articles of the ongoing labor agreement, letters of agreement and confirmation, and other documents will be revised accordingly.

Fleet resource mgmt takes step forward

Ship owners, managers, operators, flag states and training academies have partaken in extensive discussions on how to create a single, shared data environment for ship, shore, traffic control and training schools, during the closed forum organized by Transas at the recent CMA Shipping 2016.

This convening follows the launch of the Transas Harmonized Eco System of Integrated Solutions (THESIS) vision in January this year. In launching this vision Transas committed to developing a data infrastructure for the maritime industry, with the maritime industry.

The THESIS concept will manifest as an industry-wide, unified data system for information sharing across all sectors, enabling users to make better decisions, improve operations and deliver next generation training. It will facilitate ship operations as a coordinated enterprise, with ship and shore based operations centers working together, on shared information platforms.

“Transas will be able to create the environment, connect the systems and supply the tools, but the industry has to adopt the new way of working. This is why it is critical to develop the platform with the industry itself,” Frank Coles, Transas CEO, said.

“However, it is not just technology or a data infrastructure that needs to be developed, it is a new attitude within the maritime industry. This represents some of our biggest challenges,” he added.

It is these challenges that were deliberated during the inaugural closed forum. The role of the ship crew, particularly the master and superintendent and how working relationships with onshore staff might change were central to all discussions.

The gathering of industry minds also identified that the future of fleet resource management and shared responsibility is not a question of if, but rather when. It was confirmed that the provision of intelligent support and the minimization of administrative burden are key foundations upon which any unified data system should be developed.

Also, under consideration was the role of flag states and port state control. It was acknowledged that such a system could positively impact traditional practices in these fields as well as in ship operations themselves.

The forum in Stamford, Connecticut was the first in a series of global industry feedback meetings and surveys to drive the THESIS vision from development to reality. (Source: Maritime Professional)

Human element top agenda at CMA

The international ship managers’ body, InterManager, has reaffirmed its support for the welfare of seafarers, described as the “heart and soul” of shipping, at The Connecticut Maritime Association’s Shipping 2016 Conference.

Moderating the morning session, entitled “How can crews stay connected?”, Gerardo Borromeo, president of InterManager heard from impassioned

maritime stakeholders on how access to a good Internet connection has become a major concern of crews and, more widely, the shipping community. The panel discussed the impact of poor connectivity on the recruitment of new crew members and also on all areas of communication and ship operation.

Speaking of the wider human element, Borromeo said: “Attracting a new generation of sea-

farers and retaining them means we have to become more connected; allowing them to connect with family and friends back home. Without good Internet, we could lose some of the brightest, best seafarers we have ever seen.”

Continuing its commitment to the human element of the industry, InterManager Vice President George Hoyt moderated an afternoon session on fatigue; an

issue InterManager continues to fight tirelessly to raise awareness of. Hoyt spoke of the importance of the human element during his moderation and said: “The human element is crucial to successful ship management and we must ensure we work together as an industry to raise standards and to encourage good staff – the best and the brightest – to enter and stay in shipping.” (Source: InterManager)

US plans third patrol near disputed islands

The U.S. Navy planned to conduct another passage near disputed islands in the South China Sea in early April, a source familiar with the plan said, the third in series of challenges that have drawn sharps rebukes from China.

The exact timing of the exercise and which ship would travel inside a 12-nautical mile limit around a disputed island was not immediately clear.

The United States has conducted what it calls “freedom of navigation” exercises in recent months, sailing near disputed islands to underscore its right to navigate the seas. U.S. Navy officials have said they plan to conduct more and increasingly complex exercises in the future.

The *USS Stennis* carrier strike group is currently operating in the South China Sea. The next freedom of navigation exercise is unlikely to be conducted by a carrier like the *Stennis*, but rather by a smaller ship, the source said.

Experts predict the next U.S. challenge to the various claims in the South China Sea could occur near Mischief Reef, a feature claimed by the Philippines and which was submerged at high tide before China began a dredging project to turn it into an island in 2014.

Mischief Reef is now the site of one of three military-length airfields China has built on man-made islands in the Spratly Islands archipelago.

U.S. Navy ships regularly patrol the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of world trade travels every year. China claims most of the area, and Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

In recent months, with tensions rising around China’s reclamation activities, U.S. ships have been frequently and routinely shadowed by Chinese ships and regular communications with Chinese vessels have often been tense.

News of the planned exercise comes a day after U.S. President Barack Obama met with Chinese President Xi Jinping at a nuclear summit in Washington.

During the meetings, Xi told Obama that China would not accept any behavior in the disguise of freedom of navigation that violates its sovereignty, in a clear warning to the United States.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei told Reuters on Saturday that China opposed any such exercise.

“China consistently respects and supports the freedom of navigation and fly over that all countries enjoy in the South China Sea under international law, but resolutely opposes any country using so-called freedom of navigation as an excuse to damage China’s sovereignty, security and maritime rights,” Hong said. (Source: Maritime Professional)

Romance of high seas strong at heart of shipping industry

“There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting, and enslaving than the life at sea.” So said renowned Polish-British writer Joseph Conrad in his controversial 1900 novel, *Lord Jim*.

Sailors from decades past said that without shipping half the world would freeze to death, the other half would starve to death.

It is a grand, dramatic statement, I agree, but it is not too far from the truth: according to the International Chamber of Shipping, an astonishing 90% of world trade is carried by the global shipping industry.

Carrying goods by sea has provided employment opportunities – and, not to mention, danger, adventure and escape – to countless restless souls since prehistory. The romantic in me loves the fact that I report on an industry with an unbroken tradition of millennia.

At sea you could earn a living, but also run away from your problems. You could change your name and start your life anew and become – as Nikos Kavvadias, a wonderful Greek poet and writer, who also happened to be a telegraphist on board commercial ships, put it – “the perfect, unworthy lover of the endless voyage and azure ocean.”

You could also lose your life at sea. Divers will often come across cargo that got lost in a shipwreck: from ancient Greek amphorae in the depths of the Mediterranean, to golden Spanish coins in the Caribbean and French champagne bottles at the bottom of the Bal-

tic Sea. They are relics of trade from times gone by, testament to the tastes and needs – and to say nothing of the greed – of people long departed.

And let’s not forget there were dark times, not too long ago, when even human beings were considered cargo and shipped from one shore to another to be sold like any other commodity.

Today much of the cargo modern commercial vessels carry does not sound very glamorous – urea and petroleum coke don’t really have the same ring as spices, tea and mastic – but shipping remains an exciting and vibrant business to be involved in.

I talk to people who work in the maritime industry on a daily basis, from charterers to shipbrokers to owners and operators.

Yes, arranging for your cargo to be taken from the U.S. Gulf to the Far East, or mediating between an owner and charterer who are at loggerheads, or trying to find a stem for your vessel in a loading area that has five other ships competing for it, can be as stressful as any other job. Much of this work is done staring at a screen in an office like any other, with an uninspiring commute to negotiate.

However, any person involved in all this, from Piraeus to Copenhagen, from New York to Singapore, will tell you that there is something wondrous about a business that deals with transporting grain, or oil, or – yes, urea – between two ports that sometimes lie

at opposite sides of the world.

The people I talk to in the dry bulk industry are often ex-seafarers – yes, they do swear like seafarers – or are the sons and daughters of brokers and sea captains, or got involved in shipping because it sounded like an interesting industry, only to catch the shipping “bug” and, years later, can no longer imagine working in any other sector. The vast majority of them are passionate about shipping, which explains why the dry bulk sector’s recent bearishness has left them heavy-hearted. I can tell this from the tone of their voice over the phone.

Granted, dry bulk owners and shipping companies got carried away in recent years, partly because of China’s vast appetite for a variety of commodities this past decade, and ordered too many ships. Cargoes have been falling well short of supply, which lies at the core of what has been a lackluster performance by the dry bulk freight sector for over a year.

Yes, dry bulk has a long way to go before it returns to some semblance of health. But while it may take years for a rebalance to be reached, something tells me that those hard-working men and women who work in this thrilling industry will remain faithful to that little bit of romance they harbor in their hearts and that first drew them in. After all, they still have to ensure that half the world gets fed and half the world is kept warm. (Source: Platts Hellenic Shipping News)

VOICES *from* SEAFARERS



Capt. Jorge Bajala Yongque and crew of MV K&A SP

JSU should introduce or revive a medical health program. This is to accommodate the old seafarers as well as the present seafarers who are in need of medical attention. Thank you and wishing you all the best.



Capt. Alexander D. Peji and crew of MV CAPE EMERALD

The scope of employing an old seafarer should be sustained and elaborated. Their health and ability should be determined and be given priority before joining a vessel. Our beloved union should further study the advantage/disadvantage of employing the previous seafarers. Thank you and good luck.



Capt. Rosendo A. Razon and crew of MV BRILLIANT JUPITER

Contract of every seafarer should be at their own choice provided it complies with the MLC 2006. We hope those amendments to the agreement will meet the desire of the seafarers.



C/O Charys Maghibon Isberto and crew of MV VALENTE ANGEL

Wage increase should be corresponded with the sea service and merits acquired by the seafarers to the company. We are hoping our beloved union should hear our voices for the common good of all.



Capt. Wilfredo E. Robles & crew of MV BELLE ROSE

We've known JSU had exerted its great efforts to implement the recent wage increase. We are grateful to the results and wished JSU could have more success to come.



Capt. Mark Lawree Yulo Buencochillo and crew of MV MEDI GENOVA

The recent salary increase was implemented. It is amazing everybody was relieve of tension after waiting for the results. We hope this kind of increase should be observed every year.



Capt. Efren Serrano Casapao and crew of MV MEDI MATSUURA

We appreciate the JSU role in bringing up the members' living standard. The recent salary increase had served the purpose thus we're also hoping the process should goes onto the succeeding years.



2/O Cyril Cordero Galera & crew of MV CAPE VERDE

As one of the well wishers, we praised the support of JSU to the MLC 2006 implementation. The length of our rest period had given us a chance to take a trip to the Tokyo Disneyland. Thank you JSU!



Capt. Eduardo V. Durangparang and crew of MV PISCES LEADER

Some families are dependent on the regular seafarers' embarkation. It would be lively if JSU could push through the employment of the members continuously aside from the salary increase.



Capt. Allan A. Valle and crew of MV KAGUYA

One of the overwhelming news brought by the JSU staff is the wage increase for seafarers. Thanks and we're expecting more to come.



Capt. Felix Rizaldo Yap and crew of MV MINERAL HOKUSAI

The wage increase that we have is a remarkable one. Rest assured of our support of gratitude that will eventually goes to everybody and most especially to the union that made this to happen.



Capt. Jose Luis L. Villafior and crew of MV JP CORAL

We appreciate the visitation of the JSU staff who had disseminated information of the latest maritime news. Without such updates we are unaware of the current situations. Thank you and keep up your good work.

US, Japan improve port security

The U.S. Coast Guard issued a news release stating that its International Port Security team recently completed a bilateral engagement with Japanese officials to share best practices.

U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security team completed a bilateral engagement with Japanese officials during the second week of March.

This engagement involved sharing best practices and visiting with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tour-

ism's Ports and Harbors Bureau to observe the implementation of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code at two port facilities in Hakata, Japan: the Hakata Chuo passenger wharf and the Hakata island city area container terminal.

"Everyone has security responsibilities in our global economy. The Coast Guard appreciates Japan's invitation and their commitment to improving port security," said Lt. Cmdr. Scott Barton, ISPS Program liaison officer, U.S. Coast Guard Activities Far East Division.

In 2003, the U.S. Coast Guard developed the International Port Security Program to reinforce the implementation of the ISPS Code. The ISPS Program seeks to reduce risk to U.S. maritime interests, including U.S. ports and ships, and to facilitate secure maritime trade globally.

Under the auspices of this program, a U.S. Coast Guard International Port Security team conducts an annual visit to assess the effectiveness of seaport anti-terrorism measures and provides recommendations and share best

practices with government officials to reduce the risk of a maritime security incidents and impacts to the global supply chain. The ISPS program is designed to assist seaports overcome security challenges in a dynamic and ever changing threat environment.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the U.S. Coast Guard's Activities Far East unit coordinates with over 40 countries to execute these bilateral engagements. The U.S. Coast Guard is committed to promoting and facilitating safe and secure maritime trade. (Source: USCG)

Anti-piracy alliance fetes 10th anniv.

On March 18, the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) commemorated its 10th anniversary.

ReCAAP is a cooperation between Asian countries, but also other countries such as Denmark, the United States, the Netherlands, Norway and Australia take part in knowledge-sharing and problem-solving. Furthermore, ReCAAP has given inspiration for cooperation on combating piracy in Africa.

Number of incidents increase

Today, the cooperation on combating armed robbery against ships and their crews in Asia is of great importance. Recent five years have witnessed an increase in the number of armed robbery incidents in Southeast Asia. Despite a number of less serious incidents, there have also been serious situations. In 2015, there were a total of 12 captures – 11 of which occurred on oil tankers in order to steal the oil.

In order to reduce the number of armed robbery incidents, ReCAAP has been striving to optimize the cooperation between the countries of Southeast Asia. As a result, the number of incidents has been decreasing in the last six months, and no ships have been captured.

Cooperation, development continue to be prioritized

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary, a special high-level meeting was held in which several ministers from the cooperating countries took part. At the meeting, a clear signal was sent about the need for continued cooperation and for the development of ReCAAP into a "Center of Excellence". The goal is that this should come about in the years up to 2020. (Source: Maritime Professional)

Armed robbers continue their menacing ways

Armed robbery continues to menace vessels and their crews in many parts of the world. Reports to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) worldwide Piracy Reporting Centre indicate that West African waters have seen a wave of armed robbery, sometimes with violence. Recent incidents reported from around the world include the following.

- Five robbers boarded a bulk carrier anchored at Jakarta, Indonesia on March 22, and attacked the duty seafarer. The alarm was raised and the crew mustered. The robbers escaped with stolen ship property.

- Eight pirates approached and chased a tanker around 108 nautical miles off Bayelsa, Nigeria on March 11. The alarm was raised, and the tanker increased speed, made evasive maneuvers and sent distress messages. All non-essential crew members mustered in the citadel. Spotting guns and ladders in the pirates' boat, the tanker fired two parachute rockets. The pirates abandoned their attempted attack.

- Two skiffs were spotted approaching a tanker around 54 nautical miles off Brass, Nigeria on February 11. The master raised the alarm, increased speed, took evasive maneuvers and contacted the authorities. The pirates threw failed incendiary devices on to the main deck. Three pirates managed to board the tanker forcing the crew to retreat into the citadel. Before escaping, the pirates damaged all the communication equipment and stole crew personal belongings. The Nigerian navy boarded the tanker and rescued the crew.

All attacks and suspicious sightings should be reported to the IMB Piracy Reporting Centre, tel: +603 2031 0014 (24 hours), email: imbkl@icc-ccs.org (Source: ITF Seafarers)

UK detains 8 ships over PSC violations

The United Kingdom detained eight foreign-flagged ships during February 2016 after they failed port state control (PSC) inspections.

The vessels included four new detentions. The Russian-flagged *Amur 2537* was found to have 18 deficiencies with six grounds

for detention, including missing charts and line-throwing equipment.

The Panama-flagged *Vera Su* had 15 deficiencies and four grounds for detention, including missing wages for crew and no wages records. The Israeli-flagged *Nofit* had 30 deficiencies, with five

grounds for detention, including inoperative fire dampers and emergency fire pumps.

The Marshalls Islands-flagged *Agnes* had 16 deficiencies; it was detained because its launching arrangements for rescue boats were not as required. (Source: ITF Seafarers)

IMO gives more time for ECDIS transition

IMO gives ship owners more time to liaise with ECDIS manufacturers over new IHO Standards

The IMO subcommittee on Navigation, Communications and Search and Rescue (NCSR) has extended the transition period for software updates to existing ECDIS for one year to August 31, 2017.

The NCSR accepted the IHO's proposal to give all ship owners using ECDIS more time to be able to obtain the correct software updates to the new IHO-52 presentation library and thus ensure compliance with the guidelines on Maintenance of ECDIS software contained in IMO MSC 1.circ 1503.

The latest IHO Presentation Library (version 4.0) addresses the number one complaint leveled at ECDIS: constant audible alarms. By providing clear guidance to ECDIS manufacturers on ENC objects that will raise an alarm, the IHO has tackled the issue of

alarm fatigue on the bridge. Also, information such as fairway and anchorage area names now appear on screen, with landmarks, lights and buoys viewable via a "hover-over" function. Both initiatives reduce the time-consuming need to find information buried in a pick report.

In practice this extension means the current IHO Presentation Library edition 3.4 in use on serving ECDIS will remain valid until Aug. 31, 2017. From Sept. 1 all vessels will be expected to have upgraded their ECDIS software to the IHO Presentation Library edition 4.0 in order to remain compliant.

Tom Mellor is the Chairman of the IHO's ENC Working Group and also the UKHO Head of Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) Support & Digital Standards.

"By extending the time available for shipping companies to upgrade their ECDIS software to

the new IHO Presentation Library edition 4.0 we have been able to alleviate the imminent pressure on the ship owner and the overall supply chain," Mellor said.

"Ship owners are encouraged to contact their ECDIS manufacturer to start the transition to the updated ECDIS Standards, in order to ensure a smooth switchover and to take advantage of the benefits that the new editions will bring to the bridge.

"While there is more time available, the upgrade requirements will vary between different ECDIS makes and models, so it is important that owners work together with their ECDIS manufacturers to identify the steps that need to be taken for all ECDIS systems across their fleet."

The UKHO said it will continue to offer guidance for ship owners, operators and managers through its global "Living with ECDIS" seminars. (Source: MarineLink.com)

Day of the Seafarer to be celebrated in the Philippines

The International Seafarers' Welfare and Assistance Network (ISWAN) is to hold an event in Manila, the Philippines to celebrate the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Day of the Seafarer on June 25, 2016.

The event, aimed at seafarers and their families, will be addressed by the IMO secretary-general Kitack Lim and is supported by the ITF, International Chamber of Ship-

ping, Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP), International Maritime Employers Council, In-Marsat and Wrist Ship Supply.

Celebrated since 2010, the annual Day of the Seafarer recognizes the important role of seafarers, raises awareness of life at sea, and engages support for seafarers' welfare.

This year's theme "At Sea for

All", and the event in Manila – aimed to attract 2,000 participants – will include music and cultural acts as well as a health zone for seafarers and a children's activity area.

"We are extremely pleased to put on this Day of the Seafarer event in the Philippines where so many of the world's seafarers come from," Roger Harris, executive director of ISWAN, said (Source: ITF Seafarers)

ALL JAPAN SEAMEN'S UNION
15-26, Roppongi 7-Chome,
Minato-Ku, Tokyo 106-0032

Tel.: (03) 5410-8320
Fax: (03) 5410-8336
E-mail: iss@jsu.jp
Internet: http://www.jsu.or.jp

Publisher: Hiroyuki Tachikawa

Send inquiries to the attention of
Mr. Hiroyuki Watanabe,
Director, Foreign Trades Dept.