

Mariner's Home Dedicated

By Bayani A. Jaboli
JSU International
Service Staff

On Jan. 23, 2006, the JSU-AMOSUP Mariners' Home in Manila, the Philippines was officially dedicated.

The event started with a ribbon cutting ceremony led by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who was joined by JSU president Capt. Sakae Idemoto; AMOSUP president, Capt. Gregorio Oca; DOLE Secretary, Patricia Sto. Tomas, and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

After the ribbon cutting, President Arroyo unveiled a memorial marker and later toured the building to see for herself the first-class facilities awaiting seafarers.

In a speech delivered later that day, Capt. Idemoto said that the home would serve as "a symbol of the strong friendship between the Philippines and Japan."

Mayor Atienza commended the people behind the project, and affirmed his full support to the maritime industry, describing Filipino seafarers as the "pillars of the country's economic march to progress."



From left: Mayor Atienza, Secretary Sto. Tomas, President Macapagal-Arroyo, Capt. Idemoto and Capt. Oca.

Japanese Ambassador Ryuichiro Yamazaki hailed the Mariners' Home as an "ideal stop-over" for Filipino and Japanese seafarers.

Secretary Sto. Tomas said that Filipino seafarers deserved a world-class hotel.

About 300 Japanese and Filipino shipping and manning executives, officials from government maritime agencies and Filipino seafarers attended the inauguration ceremony.

Television host Paulo Bediones acted as master of ceremonies. Blessing of the

rooms and other facilities followed the reception.

A great number of Filipino seafarers have been on board the Japanese fleet and contributed to the development of the Japanese maritime industry. The Mariners' Home was established to pay tribute to these highly skilled, competent, capable, disciplined, loyal and world-class Filipino seafarers.

This is a joint project by the All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) and the Associated Marine Officers' and Seamen's Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP).

The JSU-AMOSUP Mariners' Home, located at 1765 Dr. A. Vasquez St., cor. Julio Nakpil St., Malate, Manila, is a modern structure exhibiting basic elements of traditional Japanese culture, while providing secure, decent and comfortable accommodation to Filipino seafarers in transit.

It is hoped that in the years to come, Filipino seafarers will look upon this home as an oasis and as a bridge for cultural interchange between Japan and the Philippines.

New Oasis in Manila For World's Seafarers

Following is the gist of All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) president Capt. Sakae Idemoto's speech at the ceremony marking the opening of the JSU-AMOSUP Mariners' Home. It has been edited for space and clarity:

Japanese shipowners employ more than 20,000 Filipino seafarers onboard their vessels, seafarers who have made a significant contribution to the development of Japan's maritime industry.

The number of Filipino seamen staying in Manila for the purpose of disembarking or processing deployment documents is on the increase.

Two years ago, we received a request from concerned members of the Philippine maritime sector to construct accommodation for seafarers.

The union, in consideration of its decade-long practice of undertaking various measures to improve the welfare of Filipino seafarers – the starting point for all JSU projects and activities – saw us come to an agreement that resulted in creation of a construction committee for this particular project. Under the spirit of cooperation cultivated by AMOSUP president Capt. Oca's chairmanship, we can see today proof of the goodwill and solidarity between Japanese and Filipino seafarers.

It is my undying wish that this Mariners' Home, being a place for peace and relaxation for Filipino seafarers and a bridge of cultural exchange, be utilized effectively for the longest possi-



Capt. Idemoto speaking at the opening ceremony.

ble time and become a well-loved oasis for Filipino seafarers. In order that this establishment be acknowledged by a large number of people as an effective means for bringing together Japanese and Filipino seafarers, we depend on all of you present here today to earnestly patronize this place.

To all the members of the International Mariners Management Association of Japan, Phil-Japan Manning Consultative Council, Inc., all the Philippine government officials who have supported us from pre-construction to completion, to the president of AMOSUP Greg Oca, the president of El Mar Fuente Construction Company and to many other people, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart and hoping for more understanding and support from hereon.

On behalf of the All Japan Seamen's Union, I'd like to thank you for allowing me to render these remarks.

Maraming Salamat Po.



Welcome to JSU-AMOSUP Mariner's Home!

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Union Dues and the Special Member

Q1: Are JSU Union Dues of \$40/month refunded to members when the special member retires or leaves the union?

A1: No. The monthly union dues, paid by every JSU special member on board JSU member vessels, is not in any way refundable. It was explained in Vol.

2 No. 4 of the *JSU Maritime Journal* that the JSU collects union dues from all of you, and that these dues are used to cover expenses related to the effective undertaking of various activities, including the following: 1) negotiations to conclude labor agreements; 2) resolution of complaints or other

trouble with employers over observance of a contract or agreement; 3) provision of International Service Staff for special members at main ports in Japan; 4) provision of welfare services and mutual aid activities; 5) protection of seafarers who are working without basic rights and/or in substandard condi-

tions; and 6) promotion of international solidarity, mainly with the ITF.

These are just some of the activities made possible by your union dues.

According to JSU regulations, a seafarer who is of a nationality other than Japanese and does not reside in Japan is obliged to register as a JSU Non-Domicile Special Member if that seafarer works onboard a Japanese-owned FOC or Japanese-flag vessel. This is also stated in every agreement concluded between the JSU and the

principal who hires that special member.

A seafarer who does not register with the JSU cannot work onboard a Japanese-owned vessel.

This system is based on the ITF's basic but very important principle for dealing with FOC vessels: That hiring priority be given to unions within the shipowner's country of residence.

Q2: Are cadets (deck and engine) and FMAs (fitter maintenance attendants) considered union members?

(Continued on Page 4)

Confirming Eligibility for JSU CA Retirement Pay Plan

By Yuki Okada
International Affairs
& Seafarers' Section

Q: I have been serving on board a vessel covered by a JSU agreement. Am I able to receive retirement pay from the JSU CA Retirement Pay Plan?

A: The JSU CA Retirement Pay Plan (RPP) is a system for seafarers who serve on vessels covered by the IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA, IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA, ITF JSU-CA and ITF JSU/PSU CA.

Please note that the JSU has many different types of vessel agreement. Therefore, if you are on board a vessel covered by an agreement other than those noted above, you are not considered a JSU CA RPP member, and you are not able to receive any benefits from the JSU CA Retirement Pay Plan.

If you are not sure where you stand, send us a message together with the records of your service. Our address is: 15 - 26, 7-Chome, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan. E-mail is: <yokada@jsu.jp>. We will check your records and inform you if you are a RPP member or not.

IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA
IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA
ITF JSU CA
ITF JSU/PSU CA



You are a member of JSU CA Retirement Pay Plan

IBF JSU-IMMAJ/AMOSUP CBA
ITF JSU/AMOSUP CBA



You are a member of the "JSU AMOSUP Provident Fund" (Not JSU CA RPP)
Contact AMOSUP for information.

JSU MARUSHIP Agreement
(Japanese-flag vessels)



\$50 is already included and given to you in your monthly wages during your employment on board the vessel.

Good News, Bad News for Filipinos

At least 35,000 Filipino marine officers are needed within the next five to 10 years, Manila's Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) has announced.

The deployment of Filipino seafarers is growing at an annual rate of 10 percent, according to the DOLE. The department said foreign employers usually prefer Filipino seafarers because of their ability to speak the English language well.

Maritime Industry Authority (Marina) regional director Glenn Cabañez said international shipping firms employ Filipinos because of their competence and skills.

The Philippines remains the manning capital of the world, exporting more qualified seafarers than any other nation, Cabañez said.

Seafarers rank fourth on the list of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs).

However, with the advent of technology and stiff competition from Asian neighbors, the demand for Filipino seafarers might drop, the International Labor Organization (ILO) warned in early February.

According to the ILO, the current shipbuilding boom has created strong demand for officers worldwide but the trend toward automated vessels with smaller crews has reduced the need for ratings.

A December report by the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) estimated a worldwide shortage of 10,000 qualified officers and a surplus of 135,000 ratings.

Filipino ratings are also facing competition from Asian neighbors such as China, India, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

The ILO said the benchmark monthly wage for Filipino ratings is US\$1,400, while seamen from other Asian countries are accepting jobs for as low as \$500-\$700 per month.

Some shipowners also are increasingly imposing age restrictions on seafarers; this age ceiling can be as low as 40, the ILO said.

But the ILO quoted shipping industry and labor executives as saying many shipowners still prefer Filipino crewmen because they speak English, are Western-oriented, and "flexible and have a caring attitude."

International Labor Meet Takes Up Maritime Issues

The 94th Maritime Session of the International Labor Conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland in February.

A special session devoted to the maritime sector took place during the labor conference.

The Maritime Labor Conference, which only meets once every 10 years, discussed a new maritime convention that consolidates international law on the working conditions of the world's seafarers.

The new convention is also designed to consolidate most of the more than 65 ILO maritime labor conventions and recommendations currently in force to set conditions for decent work in the increasingly globalized maritime sector.

It sets out rights to decent conditions of work for the world's 1.2 million seafarers and covers a wide range of subjects, including health, safety, minimum age, recruitment, hours of work, and other vital issues affecting a seafarer's life.

The convention has been designed to become a global instrument known as the "fourth pillar" of the international regulatory regime for quality shipping, complementing the three key conventions of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
(Source: ILO)

Oz to Use Electronic Visa System

Australia will introduce an electronic visa system for foreign seafarers from July 1, 2007.

The move means Australia will join the United States in imposing this far-higher level of security on visiting crewmembers wishing to step onto its soil.

While it supports the government's anti-terrorism objectives, Shipping Australia Ltd. (SAL), which represents overseas shipping companies, remains wary about the implications of the new regime.

"Unless a clear risk is identified, not allowing shore leave for certain categories of seafarer who do not have visas could cause problems," Shipping Australia said.

"After a long sea voyage, seafarers often look forward to shore leave, even for only

a brief respite, and prohibition could even affect the safety of the ongoing operation of the vessel."

Shipping Australia, which had been consulted about the visa move, pointed out that any one of the world's 1.2 million seafarers could call at Australian ports, but that the uncertain sailing pattern of tramp or bulk vessels would make this shipping route an unlikely vector for terrorists.

Exactly how long a seafarer's visa application takes to process could pose a problem.

However, shipping companies are more likely to be concerned by the potential cost of the new visa system.

Shipping Australia chief executive Llew Russell said: "We think [the decision] is a fairly brave one for Australia, internationally, to go out so far in front. We will now go along with it. There's nothing much else we can do, to be quite honest.

"We are confident they did take our comments into account," Russell said (*Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

'Kariba' Capt. Blamed for 'Tricolor' Loss

A U.S. District Court judge is holding the owner of containership *Kariba*, Otal Investments, liable for the collision and sinking of Walenius Wilhelmsen car carrier *Tricolor* in December 2002.

Otal Investments argued that *Tricolor* was too close to *Kariba* on a parallel course

in the fog-bound English Channel when attempting to pass and that its captain should have reacted more quickly to the *Kariba* captain's starboard turn to avoid collision with another vessel, the bulker *Clary*.

Judge Harold Baer stressed that the *Tricolor* sinking was solely the fault of *Kariba*'s captain, whose navigating decisions "defied logic" and who could have avoided the collision by simply cutting his speed instead of making two starboard turns.
(Source: *Fairplay Daily News*)

Masters Must Mind Hours

A maritime expert has emphasized the importance of masters monitoring, regulating, and recording the details of their work hours.

According to ISM Code expert Phil Anderson, the misconception that masters are exempt from the hours of rest rules is widespread and has encountered a num-

ber of examples in recent months.

Anderson warns that in the event of a serious incident, it is quite likely that the master's hours of work/hours of rest will be scrutinized very closely.

If records prove to be inaccurate, or if the master is found to have worked unlimited hours without adequate rest, then this could have devastating effects the master and the ship operator.
(Source: *MaritimeGlobal.net*)

Don't Fall Victim To Ambulance Chasers' Lies



Life as a seafarer is hard enough – those who have been injured do not need the additional aggravation of being pursued by shady characters after their money.

By Vincent P. Higoy
JSU International Service Staff

On Mar. 22, 2005, I visited one of our member vessels to explain the JSU's activities and welfare services to special members.

After the discussion, which was held during lunch break, the chief cook took me aside and asked me about the P&I club disability claim procedure and what is stipulated in our agreement.

I explained to him that based on the JSU collective bargaining agreement, a member is entitled to receive disability compensation, based on a doctor's declaration concerning the victim's disability grade, from the P&I club.

He reported that a group of former seafarers and lawyers in the Philippines – a group he declined to identify – are trying to organize seafarers who have been the victim of onboard accidents with the intention of having them to file disability claims against shipowners and unions at the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC).

According to the chief, he met with an accident while onboard a tanker, the result of which left him with a broken index finger.

The tanker was manned by a mixed crew.

As compensation for the injury, the doctor declared a 7 percent disability grade, entitling the chief to receive US\$10,000 (as per the JSU CBA).

Before he boarded his next vessel, which had been

arranged through the same manning agent, he was approached by one of the members of the group and urged to file a disability claim amounting to \$1.4 million against the JSU. The chief has been a JSU member for a long time, every month paying his union dues, and the group member said he deserved something back.

Due to the big money involved and the fact that all expenses would be paid by the group, he was easily persuaded and immediately went to the NLRC to file the complaint.

Later, the Philippine manning agent received a subpoena from the court. Upon learning about the case, the manning agent called the chief and told him to drop the case since he had already been paid as per JSU CBA rules and regulations and he was about to take up his next vessel assignment.

He went to the court an hour before his hearing to drop the case against the JSU and the manning agent.

The chief asked me if he had made the right decision because it involved giving up the opportunity to "earn" a lot of money. I explained to him that the decision to drop the case was the correct one.

I also urged him to take extra precautions the next time he is approached by an "ambulance chaser."

The JSU must follow what is stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement; any claim that is outside the agreement, the JSU is not able to support.

Seafarers' Home Away From Home



On behalf of my crewmates, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the JSU for providing us a decent place to stay while in Manila.

As a seafarer who lives outside Manila, a place to stay is very important for me when my manning agency asks me to report for training and to sign a contract for embarkation.

Noel A. Borjal, Chief Officer, Cagayan De Oro City

I am very happy to know that the JSU has finally launched its JSU-AMOSUP Mariner's Home. This hotel will help us a lot, especially those seafarers who don't have any relatives living in Manila.

The inexpensive hotel room and free breakfast will help seafarers stretch their already tight budgets, especially those who have been on standby waiting for a vessel assignment.

Alberto Nizo, Fitter, San Jose Antique



For me, providing this welfare benefit is a good idea especially for those seafarers living in far-away provinces. The price is very cheap compared to boarding houses and transient hotels you find within metropolitan Manila.

I hope that the JSU will continue to pursue more welfare benefits for its foreign members.

Rafael M. Laguerta, Messman, General Santos City



LETTER from HEADQUARTERS

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) has two types of international labor agreement covering Non-Domicile Special Members working for Japanese shipping lines onboard Flag of Convenience (FOC) vessels.

We discussed the International Bargaining Forum (IBF) agreement in a previous issue of JSU Maritime Journal. It covers the majority of Non-Domicile Special Members, who work onboard ships belonging to companies that are approved members of the Joint Negotiation Group (JNG).

The other type of agreement is the Non-IBF agreement. It covers Non-Domicile Special Members who onboard FOC vessels for shipping companies that do not belong to the IBF.

The JSU can revise this agreement by applying ITF policies that will improve working conditions for seafarers of all nationalities and ensure adequate regulation of the shipping industry to protect seafarer interests and rights.

Last November, the JSU decided to revise the following articles of the Non-IBF agreement; changes are effective as of January 1.

Partial revision: Rest periods, manning, termination of employment, misconduct, disability, loss of life/death in service, food, accommodation, bedding, amenities and communication, total crew cost (TCC), vacation leave, and compensation payment.

The JSU also has decided to revise the labor agreement covering Non-Domicile Special Member working onboard Japanese-flag ships.

Effective from Jan. 1, 2007, the following changes will apply (according to the new TCC based on the ILO meeting of February 2006):

- Vacation leave extended to 8 days;
- Compensation payment increased by 10 percent; and
- Free e-mail service.

We will continue to work to help protect your rights and provide welfare services that meet International labor standards.

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Director, Foreign Trades Dept.

Filipino Maritime Network Japan: The Helping Hand

By Capt. Francis Medina,
Solar Japan Co., Ltd.
Chairman, Filipino Maritime
Network Japan (FMN)

Group Profile

Established in April 1996, Filipino Maritime Network Japan (FMN) comprises Filipinos involved in the maritime industry and who are currently living and working in Japan.

There are about 20,000 Filipinos working as seamen aboard Japanese-owned vessels. FMN provides a network wherein these seafarers can link-up with their land-based counterparts both in Japan and the Philippines.

Likewise, through FMN, Filipinos in the different maritime agencies exchange information and give assistance and support to each other, especially when some particular need arises.

FMN was also organized in order to promote the welfare and upgrade the quality of Filipino seafarers. In particular, three objectives were formulated by the founding individuals:

1. FMN is to assist in improving education and training of the Filipino seafarer;
2. FMN is to promote and maintain understanding, goodwill, camaraderie, and harmony among seafarers and other members of the maritime industry;
3. FMN is to assist in ensuring the implementation of welfare programs.

FAQs-

(Continued From Page 1)
and therefore should be deducted by monthly union dues?

A2: Cadets (deck and engine) and FMAs (fitter maintenance attendants) are consider as not regular crew on board, which is why a monthly union dues is not deducted on their monthly wage rate.

Q3: I was asked by my manning agent to sign a waiver which stated that in case something happened to me onboard – e.g. accident – that is not job related, no compensation for sickpay/disability would be offered to me by my company. Is this legal under existing JSU agreements?

A3: Any waiver signed by

Group History

In 1995, on the last Friday of the month, a group of Filipino executives working in various Japanese shipping companies would meet in Ginza, Tokyo, at St. Tropez – a typical cafe/bar with soft lighting and music. This ambiance was just right, allowing group members to relax and share some stories or jokes after a hard day of work in the fast pace city of Tokyo. One thing good about this place is that it had a Filipino bartender who assisted members who were struggling with the Japanese language.

During these meetings, experiences at work were shared. This helped to relieve stress and anxiety encountered daily in the maritime industry. Moreover, information and opinions were aired, a process that helped group members with their daily decision-making. One of the most frequently discussed issues during these gatherings was how to improve the quality and welfare of Filipino seafarers.

As months went by, word traveled through friends and acquaintances. Little by little, the group began to increase in number. In time, a decision was made that a formal organization should be created in order to address the issues affecting seafarers.

At first, a few members were worried about proceeding with the idea since they

feared that it might lead to conflicts of interest given their positions in the industry.

However, the majority rose above these fears, arguing that having such an organization provided more advantages than disadvantages.

Furthermore, members would have the opportunity not only to interact socially but also to have an organized body dedicated to serving the maritime industry. Thus was born the concept of the Filipino Maritime Network in Japan (FMN).

As the existence of the group spread, the Labor Attache of the Philippine Embassy encouraged the group to pursue the idea of forming a network. Thus, on Apr. 19, 1996, the first meeting of the group with the Labor Attache was held at the Philippine Embassy. It was a night to be remembered as the members ventured forth in preparing the mechanics for the organization with the assistance of Atty. Rey Regalado.

On July 26, 1996, after months of deliberation, the charter officers were elected and committees were created that would oversee and execute the objectives of the organization. The next step was to lay down the foundation and set the necessary steps in order to function properly.

On Oct. 29, 1996, the officers were inducted at the Tokyo Otani Hotel by then Hon. Leonardo A. Quisumbing, Philippine Secretary of Labor and Employment. The event was witnessed by Japanese shipping executives and a delegation of Filipino ship management representatives from the Philippine Shipping Mission to Japan.

wage while he remains sick, from a minimum of 60 days up to a maximum of 130 days.

However, in the event of incapacity due to an accident, basic wages shall be paid until the injured seafarer has been cured or until a medical determination is made in accordance concerning permanent disability.

Disability: A seafarer who suffers permanent disability as a result of an accident while in the employment of the company regardless of fault, including accidents occurring while traveling to or from the ship, and whose ability to work as a seafarer is reduced as a result thereof, but excluding permanent disability due to willful acts, shall in addition to sick pay, be entitled to compensation according to the provisions of the JSU agreement.

Applying for Retirement Pay

By Yuki Okada
Senior Clerical Staff,
International Affairs &
Seafarers' Section

An RPP member can receive retirement pay when he/she fulfills any of the following conditions:

1. When the member is over the age of 50 and retires from sea service permanently;
2. When the member is no longer able to work as a seafarer because of injury, illness or death; or
3. When the member is a radio officer and has lost his job because of the GMDSS system.

If a member fulfills any of the above conditions and wishes to receive retirement pay, the member should send a letter, fax or e-mail to the JSU office (International Affairs & Seafarers Section: 15-26, 7-Chome, Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 106-0032, Japan; Attention: General Secretary). The JSU will check the member's RPP records to confirm that the member is eligible to receive retirement pay; if so, then the JSU will send an RPP application form to the member's home address.

The member should fill out the RPP application form and return it to the JSU. After receiving the RPP application form from the member, the JSU will take steps to remit the member's retirement pay to the bank account indicated on the RPP application. The remittance process will take about one month.

Please send inquiries/questions to: <yokada@jsu.jp>.

JOKE CORNER

A wealthy old man was on his death bed. He wanted badly to take some of his money with him. Calling his priest, his doctor and his lawyer to his bedside, he gave each of them P100,000 cash.

"This cash is to be held by each of you. I trust you to put it in my coffin when I die so I can take my money with me."

At the funeral, each man put an envelope in the coffin. Riding away, the priest suddenly broke into tears and confessed, "I only put P50,000 into the envelope because I needed P50,000 for a new baptistry."

"Well, since we're confiding in each other," said the doctor, "I only put P30,000 in the envelope because we needed a new machine at the hospital which cost P70,000."

The lawyer was angry. "I'm ashamed of both of you," he exclaimed. "I want it known that when I put my envelope in that coffin, it held my personal check for the full P100,000." (Source: Jokes.com)