

New Year Message From President Fujisawa



Youji Fujisawa
President

I would like to offer my wish for a happy New Year to all JSU non-domiciled special members.

My name is Youji Fujisawa. I assumed the post of JSU president when the union held the 67th annual meeting of its National Congress in Tokyo last November.

I would like to take this opportunity to stress that the JSU is firmly determined to do everything in its power to enable each and every one of its 42,000 non-domiciled special members to fulfill his/her duties safely and securely.

You may be asking yourself how we plan to achieve this promise. To begin with, the union has decided to hire additional non-Japanese staff. This move will make it easier for us to serve the needs of our non-domiciled special members. Most importantly, we will have more opportunities to communicate with non-domiciled special members,

ensuring that the JSU and its special members continue to work hand in hand.

You may be wondering when this plan will be put into action. I can report that we have already begun the hiring process, having received recommendations for possible candidates from our counterpart labor unions and other organizations.

Next, we will also endeavor to improve labor conditions in an effort to raise the status of our non-domiciled special members at the International Bargaining Forum (IBF), which was established jointly by the International Maritime Employers' Committee (IMEC), the International Mariners Management Association of Japan (IMMAJ) and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

The IBF is expected to hold negotiations for the 2008-2009 business year in October.

As indicated in ITF policies, we are also confident that solidifying partnerships with our counterparts in the maritime sector – beneficial owners, seafarer supply and other countries and regions – will help to cement a firm foundation upon which the future of non-domiciled special members will be based.

We realize we have very big missions to complete. However, we believe that nothing is beyond our reach so long as we help each other and work in harmony. We hope that 2007 will be the start of a new age of security for all seafarers and a great year for non-domiciled special members.

National Congress Agrees Action Items for 2007

The All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) convened the 67th annual meeting of its National Congress at Hotel Mariners' Court, Tokyo, from November 7 to 10, 2006.

A total of 384 delegates participated in a series of extended discussions during the congress, and in the end reached agreement on new action items for the coming year. The focus of these items is placed firmly on stabilization of employment and improvement of working environments.

The policies incorporate important challenges, such as 1) maintaining order at sea, 2) stabilizing members' livelihoods, 3) exploring new business fields, 4) developing broadband systems at sea, 5) responding to the asbestos issue and 6) securing and educating a new generation of seafarers.

As regards policies concerned with our non-domiciled special members, decisions were made on several action items, among which is the plan to hire additional

non-Japanese staff. These new employees will help us improve the services provided to our 42,000 non-domiciled special members.

On the fourth and final day of the congress, attendees elected members of the Central Executive Board Committee, the president, vice-president and five general directors.

The JSU and its new Central Executive Board Committee re-emphasized their determination to achieve the union's goals in 2007.



Norimasa Ohuchi
Vice-President



Hideo Ikeda
General Director
International Affairs Bureau



Suezo Kondoh
General Director
Fisheries Affairs Bureau



Takashi Miyake
General Planning Office
Central Executive Board
Committee



Kenji Takahashi
General Director
General Affairs Bureau



Masaru Mio
General Director
Domestic Affairs Bureau

JSU Secures Rise in Food Allowance

The JSU met with the IMMAJ on Dec. 18, 2006, and successfully negotiated an increase in the food allowance by US\$0.50 from \$5.50 to \$6.00 effective Jan. 1, 2007.

The agreement applies to the IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA, IBF JSU/PSU-IMMAJ CA, IBF JSU-IMMAJ CA, ITF JSU/AMOSUP CBA and ITF JSU CA.

The previous food allowance was implemented many years ago, and had never been raised. We received suggestions from seafarers to negotiate for an increase in their food allowance as the price of provisions has increased worldwide. We hope this increase will provide seafarers with a sufficient supply of healthy food.

The JSU also revised the IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA initiated in 2007, raising the Training Levy Fund by US\$3.00 from \$15 to \$18; the fund element for "education and other" was reduced by \$3.00 to compensate.

IBF JSU/AMOSUP-IMMAJ CBA (effective from Jan. 1, 2007)

Article 13: Contribution to Seafarer's Training, Upgrading of Skill and Education Project

Previous 13.2: "The company agrees to contribute financially fifteen U.S. Dollars (US\$15.00) per Seafarer of complement covered by this agreement per month as "Training Levy" to this project."

Revised 13.2: "The company agrees to contribute financially eighteen U.S. Dollars (US\$18.00) per Seafarer of complement covered by this agreement per month as "Training Levy" to this project."

Many Ports Still Fail to Comply With ISPS Code: 'Fairplay'

Specialist maritime publication, *Fairplay*, has learned that some ports are still not in compliance with the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, noting that security at these facilities is regarded as sub-standard.

A feature in a recent edition of *Fairplay* magazine included interviews with government and private-sector security experts who said that some ports have not been able to meet ISPS criteria. Reasons for this fail-

ure were said to be financial and/or as the result of authorities' inability to grasp the code's general requirements. The publication indicated that the problem was most acute in developing countries.

The U.S. Coast Guard acknowledged that teams visiting ports under its International Port Security Program have found sub-standard facilities and are working with the ports to help them come into compliance, according to *Fairplay*.

It noted that a website maintained by the Baltic and International Maritime Council (BIMCO) and that draws on input from visiting masters shows that some 10 percent of port and port facilities have sub-standard security.

"And with no mandatory audit or verification scheme in place, and the fact that the IMO's own voluntary audit scheme excludes security compliance, the only apparent verification of ISPS compliance comes as ports subscribe to advanced ISO certification," *Fairplay* said.

The report urged masters to consider raising their ships' MarSec levels when calling sub-standard ports. It may spare them from PSC boardings and inspections on subsequent visits to the U.S. and EU. (Source: *Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

North Sea Emissions Countdown

Commercial vessels operating in the North Sea have less than a year to demonstrate compliance with new standards for exhaust emissions.

The North Sea SOx Emission Control Area (SECA) will come into effect on Nov. 22, 2007, one year after the entry into force of related amendments to Annex VI Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships of the International Convention for the Preven-

tion of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto (MARPOL 73/78).

In a SECA, the sulphur content of fuel oil used onboard ships must not exceed 1.50 percent m/m. Alternatively, ships must fit an exhaust gas cleaning system.

The Baltic Sea SECA has been implemented and operational since May 19, 2006.

Other amendments to Annex VI and the NOx Technical Code, which were adopted on July 22, 2005 and entered into effect during November last year, relate to the conduct of surveys and issuing of certificates. (Source: *Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

Fatigue Threatens Crew, Vessel Safety Says Report

Excessive working hours onboard ships pose serious safety hazards and dangers to the health and well-being of seafarers, a six-year study has concluded.

Key findings of the study include the following:

- * Almost 50 percent of seafarers taking part in the study reported working weeks of 85 hours or more.

- * Around half said their working hours had increased over the past 10 years, despite new regulations intended to combat fatigue.

- * Almost 50 percent of seafarers taking part in the study consider their working hours present a danger to their personal safety.

- * Some 37 percent said their working hours sometimes posed a danger to the safe operations of their ship.

- * One-in-four seafarers said they had fallen asleep while on watch.

The report recommends a range of measures to address the problem, including a review of the way in which working hours are recorded, better fatigue management training, an industry standard for measuring fatigue, and an auditing tool to assess the significance of various risk factors.

The U.K. Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Health and Safety Executive sponsored the study, with support from a seafarers' union and the Seafarers' International Research Center at Cardiff University. (Source: *MaritimeGlobal Online*)

German Owners Catch Heat Over Re-Flagging Sloth

German shipowners are facing pressure to reverse the recent trend of leaving the domestic register, with government and trade union representatives threatening to walk away from the country's national maritime pact.

The association of German ship owners was forced to commit to the reflagging of another 80 ships at the 5th

National Maritime Conference in Hamburg on December 4 in exchange for a continuation of the tonnage tax and reduced income tax rates for German seafarers.

The aim is to have 500 ships under the country's flag by 2008 and 600 by 2010, provided that shipping markets do not collapse.

Frank Leonhard, chair-

man of the German shipowners' association, got strong opposition when he suggested that the number of German-flagged ships might decline even further.

"This is not due to a lack of determination within the industry. There are simply no German captains available," he warned.

The association promised it would contribute 50 percent of its annual membership fees to training institutes and universities in order to train German masters. (Source: *Fairplay Daily News*)

Philippines High Court Rules On Seafarer PEME Status

The pre-employment medical examination (PEME) does not determine a seafarer's true state of health, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled in a decision handed down in November.

This decision means that a seafarer cannot rely on his PEME, which some P&I clubs are making mandatory for crew on member companies' fleets, to prove that an illness was acquired during employment.

In the case in question, NYK-Fil Shipmanagement faced a claim of US\$60,000 for permanent total disability after a company doctor found a boatswain to have septic arthritis and a vascular necrosis of the left hip.

The seafarer had complied with a requirement to undergo a PEME, and at the time was advised by a government doctor not to engage in manual labor that would entail prolonged standing, running and carrying heavy objects.

The labor arbiter awarded disability benefits of \$6,530 or equivalent grade of half of grade 9 disability. But the labor court, known as the National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC), awarded a total of \$60,000 due to negligence and the seafarer's inability to pursue his career.

The Court of Appeals affirmed the NLRC ruling, but NYK-Fil took the case to the Supreme Court and argued that the appellate court failed to consider that the seafarer suffered from the condition before commencing his employment. It said that the condition limited, if not negated the company's liability.

The Supreme Court ruled that "disability arising from a pre-existing illness is not compensable." (Source: *Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

NYK Shipmgmt Opens S'pore Center

NYK Shipmanagement has opened a dedicated training center in Singapore to provide advanced training to senior officers.

The center, launched late last year, has bridge, engine room and cargo handling simulators and will provide

advance training for up to 450 senior merchant marine officers every year.

NYK is expecting a 50 percent increase in manpower needs by 2010 and desperate to recruit foreign officers as the domestic pool continues to shrink.

NYK Shipmanagement recently received a training award from Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority. Encouragement from the MPA along with location and infrastructure paved the way for the training center. (Source: *Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

Sanko Line, Baliwag Agree Training Partnership

Sanko Line of Japan is increasing its stake in maritime education and training in the Philippines by setting up a partnership with a marine academy owned by Baliwag Navigation.

Sanko president and chief executive Takeshi Matsui confirmed in early December that both training equipment and funding would be provided for Baliwag Maritime Academy.

Sanko's move is part of its strategy to secure manpower for its expanding fleet. With a fleet of 121 bulkers, tankers, container and LPG carriers, Sanko is awaiting

delivery of 89 newbuilding bulkers and tankers over the next three years.

Matsui said it was Sanko's first direct tie-up with a Philippine academy, although they have been sourcing cadets from eight other maritime schools to develop future officers.

Apart from increasing cadetship level, Sanko is adding the number of vessels to be fully-manned by Filipinos, which currently stand at 16 vessels. "We have 25 ships on order that will be fully-crewed by Filipinos," he said. (Source: *Lloyd's Register/Fairplay*)

Master Charged For Ignoring Pax in Distress

A master was charged on Nov. 29, 2006 with failure to render assistance to persons in distress within the Federated States of Micronesia Exclusive Economic Zone.

Zhang Xiaohui, master of Chinese fishing support vessel *Hai Shun*, faces a penalty of US\$100,000 and/or one year in jail if convicted.

Four lost passengers allegedly encountered *Hai Shun* on August 5 in the open Pacific Ocean, but the vessel allegedly did not offer assistance. The four spent another 29 days at sea before being rescued.

Col. Pius Chotailug, chief of Federated States of Micronesia's Police, said: "This is a very clear breach of not only national and international law but it is a fundamental obligation of all mariners to render assistance to one another in distress." (Source: *NsNet Online*)

For Your Health: Be Smart! Stay Safe from STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are infections that have one thing in common: they are transmitted from person to person through sexual contact.

STDs are caused by a variety of microorganisms – bacteria, viruses, fungi and protozoa (a type of single-celled organism) and other parasites. There are scores of STDs, but most have low incidence rates.

The common bacterial STDs include syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia. The common viral STDs are human papillomavirus (HPV) infection, viral hepatitis, genital herpes, molluscum contagiosum and HIV/AIDS, while the most common protozoal STD is Trichomoniasis.

Many of the microorganisms that cause STDs can be transmitted by means aside from sexual contact. HIV and viral hepatitis, for example can be transmitted by blood transfusion, and injections or pinpricks with infected needles. Some STDs such as HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and Chlamydia can pass from mother to fetus during pregnancy or at birth.

Most of the agents that

“Seafarers are subject to infectious diseases, both as a result of shore and shipboard exposure. In the developed countries it is claimed that no other occupational group has a higher prevalence of infectious diseases than seafarers. Like other transport workers – and in the same way as migrant workers – seafarers have higher rates of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs): a review of studies of STDs among seafarers showed rates of gonorrhea in different national groups of seafarers were between five and 20 times as great as the national average prevalence for males. Prior infection with STDs such as gonorrhea and chancroid is known to increase transmissibility of HIV.” – **International Labor Organization**

cause STDs are very fragile (except for the hepatitis virus which is hardy) and survive only very briefly when outside the human body. They are also unable to penetrate the skin and can enter the body only through the mucous membranes or by inoculation.

Furthermore, it is not possible to acquire any STD from a sexual activity with a person who is not carrying a disease. Thus, STDs should really be easy to prevent, yet they are one of the most common of the communicable diseases.

Syphilis is caused by a

bacterium (*T. pallidum*) that is highly contagious. The disease goes through several stages if untreated. The first stage is characterized by a painless sore on the penis or vulva, which disappears spontaneously. The second stage is heralded by a skin rash that appears weeks after the painless sore has healed. In the third stage, the bacteria attack the various organs of the body such as the brain and cardiovascular system and may cause infirmity and even death.

Gonorrhea is caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoea*. Among males, it is

usually easy to detect because of its unmistakable symptoms – discharge of pus from the penis and painful urination that start two to seven days after exposure. Gonorrhea is a leading cause of infertility. Sometimes it spreads and affects other organs of the body including the joints and the heart.

Chlamydia is more common than gonorrhea and syphilis. Chlamydial infections are usually asymptomatic (i.e., without symptoms.) The signs and symptoms, if they occur, become noticeable between four to 28 days after sexual intercourse with an infected partner. In men, they include mild burning sensation in the urethra (urinary passageway) while urinating and minimal clear or cloudy

penile discharge. In women, the symptoms are usually milder and include frequent and painful urination and vaginal discharge.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infections are the most common STDs. A family of viruses that has more than 100 members or types is responsible for HPV infections. Some types cause genital and throat warts. Some are associated with cancer, notably of the cervix, but also of the anus, vulva, vagina, throat and penis. The HPV that cause cervical cancer are different from those that cause genital warts.

Viral hepatitis is caused by any of five known types of hepatitis viruses – A, B, C, D and E. Of these, A, B and C can be sexually transmitted. Viral hepatitis can be fulminant during its acute stage. In addition, types B and C hepatitis can become chronic, progressively damage the liver, and eventually produce cirrhosis (severe scarring).

Ultimately, over a period of many years (20-30 years) the liver fails. Liver cirrhosis is also a predisposing factor for liver cancer.

How can STDs be prevented? Indulge only in monogamous sex with a partner who has no STD, or practice “safe sex,” which essentially means using condoms during the sex act. (Source: *Manila Bulletin*)



We, the crewmembers of *M/V Ultra Ace*, express our appreciation for the activities being undertaken by Filipino JSU ISS on behalf of JSU members.

With the implementation of the ISPS Code, crewmembers are having a hard time making it out of the ports they visit. As such, we welcome visitors who give us updates about the maritime industry and our home country.

– Romeo N. Basiano, Master, *Ultra Ace*



Crewmembers of *M/V Ibi* wish their families, the JSU and AMOSUP and their manning agency, NYL-Fil, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

They also offer their thanks to everyone responsible for negotiating the new CBA.

JOKE CORNER

Pirates hijack a vessel and contact the shipowner, demanding millions of dollars for the safe release of the crew and the ship.

Pirate leader: If you don't pay us, we will kill all the seafarers and sink the ship.

Shipowner: Oh! Please don't kill the crew! Please don't sink the ship!

Pirate: The choice is yours.

Shipowner: Oh! Please don't kill the crew on the ship! Do it somewhere else! (*Inspired by Hero*)

LETTER from HEADQUARTERS

Your Welfare Our Concern

With the ranks of JSU non-domiciled members increasing, we are recruiting ten additional Filipino International Service Staff (ISS) to augment the activities of the present team of four.

We consider ship visits by ISS an important bridge between members and the Union. The present JSU ISS have been receiving queries, questions, comments and suggestions from JSU non-domiciled members regarding their working conditions not only through ship visits but also through e-mails and telephone calls. We expect the new ISS to be in action to serve you this year.

Meanwhile, the JSU is cooperating with AMOSUP for the construction of another Seamen's Hospital, this time in Davao City, Mindanao. We are also cooperating with the Philippine Seafarers' Union (PSU) on the construction of a six-story building in Cebu City that will serve as a Mariners' Home and Training Center. As there is shortage of officers, the training center will contribute to enhancing the competency of future officers and ratings.

Many seafarers have been asking if there is a JSU office in Manila. The JSU launched operation of a welfare office in Manila in 1991. Our JSU Manila Welfare Office is located on the 6th floor of the JSU-AMOSUP Mariners' Home, 1765 Dr. A. Vasquez cor. J. Nakpil Sts., Malate, Manila. In the Philippines, you may inquire at this office by dialing (02)527-2291. A Japanese JSU staffer is assigned to this office as manager and will gladly entertain any queries regarding the JSU.

If vessels covered by JSU agreements have yet to implement new provisions – i.e. the approved wage level, free e-mail access for crewmembers and monthly seniority allowance – please let us know. We encourage all JSU non-domiciled members to inform JSU staff of any issues regarding the JSU agreement. Contact details appear below. It is our desire that your working and living conditions are in accordance with the agreement.

We wish you a safe voyage and harmonious relationships onboard.

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Send inquiries to the attention
of Mr. Masanobu Makizoe,
Director, Foreign Trades Dept.

IMMAJ, PJMCC Discuss Future Seafarer Supply

On Oct. 26 and 27, 2006, a conference entitled "Working Together to Meet the Challenge for a Stable Supply of Seafarers," was held by the International Mariners Management Association of Japan (IMMAJ) and the Philippine-Japan Manning Consultative Council (PJMCC) in Tokyo, Japan.

The conference, aimed to foster strong cooperative ties, was attended by shipping and government representatives of the two countries.

The chairman of the IMMAJ, Nobuo Kayahara, stated that 80 percent of the seafarers working aboard Japanese ships are Filipinos. Because it is expected that the Japanese fleet will expand by some 500 ships over the next four years, Japanese shipping companies may require in excess of 8,000 new Filipino seafarers to man these bot-

toms.

This number of seafarers cannot be achieved without the commitment of the Philippine Government and manning agencies. Because of the rapid increase of the world's merchant fleet, the stable supply of seafarers is a critical issue, not only for maintenance of the Japanese merchant fleet, but also for sound development of the world merchant fleet.

Arturo Brion, Secretary, Philippine Department of Labor and Employment, assured the leaders of the Japanese maritime industry that the Philippine Government will carry out specific action plans to address various concerns of the shipping companies.

Yasuhisa Tsujimoto, senior managing director of the IMMAJ, proposed in his speech a Philippine-Japan Joint Project wherein Japan would offer technical assistance after determining

whether Japanese ways of educating and training would be effective in the Philippines.

Capt. Gregorio Oca of the AMOSUP and other Filipino speakers tackled important issues regarding the shortage of qualified Filipino officers.

At the end of the conference, the IMMAJ and PJMCC agreed to sustain their cooperation in ensuring a stable supply of Filipino officers serving onboard Japanese ships.

Both organizations acknowledged the need to drill down on related issues and to draw up measures from mid- and long-term perspectives in order to respond to the impending shortage of seafarers. They also assured that the relationship between the maritime industries of Japan and the Philippines would be strengthened and would continue to prosper.

New Cook Trainees

On Nov. 20, 2006, the JSU-owned Hotel Mariners' Court Tokyo held a graduation ceremony for six Filipino cook-trainees.

The six trainees belong to the 13th class to undertake the year-long training program, which is supported by the JSU in coordination with the Japan Transport Cooperation Association.

The cook-trainees have studied the preparation of Western and Asian cuisine. They are expected to join the fleet of Japanese ships under their sponsoring manning agency, Barko International in Manila. Unitra Maritime Co., Ltd. is the principal in Japan.

Three Philippines manning agencies – Barko International, Magsaysay Maritime Corp. and Leonis Navigation – are the usual sponsors of the cook-trainees.

While learning to prepare various foods, the trainees also observe the way Japanese work, their culture and study basic Japanese language. This knowledge will allow them to feed mixed Japanese and Filipino crews, preparing healthy and delicious food for everyone on board.

Many previous trainees are now Chief Cooks on board Japanese vessels, a fact that Philippine Labor Attache Reydeluz Conferido noted in his congratulatory speech.

The president of the Japan Transport Cooperation Association noted that ship's cook is one of the most important members of the crew.

The new president of the JSU, Yuji Fujisawa, congratulated the trainees and advised them to nurture their experience in Japan and use it as a tool in pursuit of a successful shipboard career.

The six graduates are Joel A. de la Cruz; Richard G. Amores; Armando V. Hipulan Jr.; Saturnino S. Lope; Corpuz V. Noble; and Bon Bryan G. Sunga. We look forward to meeting them in the galley soon. (By ISS B.A. Jaboli)



JSU International Service Staff attending the 67th National Congress held in Tokyo, Japan (from left): William C. Mambalo, Ernesto T. Quijano, Eduardo E. Galang and Bayani A. Jaboli.

October 2006 Deadly for Seafarers; Kashima Port Site of Three Casualties

The month of October 2006 proved to be one of the deadliest ever in the Port of Kashima, Japan, as one Capesize vessel was lost and two were grounded.

During a storm on Oct. 6, 2006, ore carrier *Giant Step* went aground offshore Kashima Port while trying to weigh anchor; extreme weather prevented her from completing the maneuver.

The vessel grounded on a sand bar and was then subjected to excessive force on her hull caused by strong winds and heavy swells. She broke into three sections.

Of the 26 predominantly

Indian crewmembers, 13 were rescued by Japan Coast Guard helicopters, 3 drifted ashore alive while 8 were confirmed dead and 2 went missing.

On October 24, strong winds and heavy swells again hit the Pacific coast of Japan. The Hong Kong-flagged *Ocean Victory* and the Panama-flagged *Ellida Ace* were both berthed and discharging cargo when, as a precautionary measure, they were ordered to head for the open sea.

Ocean Victory, laden with ore, ran aground close to the southern side of Kashima's

breakwater while *Ellida Ace* and her cargo of coal laden went aground just north of the breakwater.

All 20 Filipino crew of *Ellida Ace* and all 24 Chinese crew of *Ocean Victory* were airlifted to safety by the Japan Coast Guard helicopters. Speculation is that orders for the ships to reposition offshore came too late to be accomplished safely.

Crewmembers of *Giant Step* and *Ellida Ace* are all JSU non-domiciled members and therefore are qualified to receive compensation in accordance with JSU agreements.

Some JSU staff visited and provided assistance to survivors of *Giant Step* immediately after the tragedy. On October 28, the ISS and JSU staff visited the crew of *Ellida Ace* and *Giant Step* including an Indian Fitter who was still at the hospital. The JSU provided each survivor an Accident Benefit amounting to ¥30,000 and ¥50,000 condolence payment to the families of every dead or missing seafarer. The above payments are separate from the compensation provided by the agreements. (By ISS B.A. Jaboli)