The Vietnamese Seafarers Upgrading Project (VSUP) Management Committee convened its 40th meeting on June 2, the 19th commencement and 20th matriculation ceremonies were held in Ho Chi Minh City on June 3, and in Haiphong on June 4, respectively.

During the meeting, a Vietnamese member of the committee in charge of providing English language lessons to Vietnamese seamen said the project has received good response from the shipping industry because it contributes significantly to improving the quality of local seamen.

Furthermore, he said that the project should be maintained in order to continue the development of the local shipping sector. As such, the committee decided to extend the project for two additional years from December 2008, and began talks to consider including other languages as well.

Some 40 members of the Japanese and Vietnamese maritime industries attended the 18th commencement and 20th matriculation ceremonies in the two cities to congratulate the 60 graduates and 60 new students. Some of the many voicing their opinions said that if the Vietnamese economy is to continue growing, the Vietnamese fleet must be expanded and the local shipping industry maintained and developed. In order to do so, however, they agreed that the nation must secure and train highly capable seamen.

Seafarers’ Section, Fair Practices committees meet at ITF

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) convened meetings of its Seafarers’ Section and Fair Practices committees from June 14 to 19 in Stockholm, Sweden.

At the Seafarers’ Section Committee and Conference, opinions were exchanged on the current state of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as well as general issues in the shipping industry.

Discussions were held on the vigorous efforts being made to combat piracy off Somalia, Nigeria and in other parts of the world. In addition, the need to provide training and education toward improvements in the quality and number of seamen was also discussed. After discussions and the exchange of opinions, a resolution was unanimously adopted.

The ITF revealed it had launched a new system as part of organizational reforms in its maritime affairs and port/harbor sector, under which the seamen, port and harbor, fishery and inland water transport divisions, in addition to the agreement team and other organizations are now placed under Maritime Coordinator Steve Cotton.

It was confirmed that the ITF would continue to hold campaigns, focusing on the following six initiatives – responses to ILO and IMO developments: the IMO and minimum number of crew; the maintenance of seafarer capabilities; crimes committed by seamen and fair treatment; safety and health; and global organization.

As for ratings from developed economies (DEEs), the ITF secretariat announced that it had established an administration committee consisting of the maritime coordinator as well as the leaders and sub-leaders of the Seafarers’ and Dockers’ sections, and developed a draft of regulations. It also introduced members of advisory committees in Europe and Asia.

The secretariat went on to call for attendees to make comments on the draft. At the Fair Practices Committee Steering Group (FPC SG) and the Fair Practices Committee (FPC), review of the FOC campaign was conducted. Discussions have been held on domestic and international laws concerned with it in accordance with a precedent set for Viking Line, and opinions were obtained from affiliated unions on important matters regarding the campaign.

It was also confirmed that the working committee would review the FOC campaign, including roles and the effective deployment of ITF coordinators and would compile an interim report on discussions. Reports given during the meetings between the Seafarers’ and Dockworkers’ sections, including a motion

Continued on Page 2

JSU attends ceremonies in Tianjin

Ten guests from Japan and 23 from China attended the ILO and IMO campaigns, focusing on the ITF would continue to hold.

itime Coordinator Steve Cotton and other organizations water transport divisions, in harbor, fishery and overland port/harbor sector, under its maritime affairs and launched a new system as exchange of opinions, a resolution toward improvements in the training and education part of the world. In addition, Somalia, Nigeria and in other parts of the world. In addition, the need to provide training and education toward improvements in the quality and number of seamen. Some of the many voicing their opinions said that if the Vietnamese economy is to continue growing, the Vietnamese fleet must be expanded and the local shipping industry maintained and developed. In order to do so, however, they agreed that the nation must secure and train highly capable seamen.

All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU) President Yoji Fujisawa said he would like to continue to support the creation of more opportunities for Vietnamese seamen to work onboard Japanese commercial vessels.

Capt. Yoji Fujisawa, President of All Japan Seamen’s Union and Ms. Do Hong Phan, Vice President of the Vietnam Women’s Union, present diplomas to students.

Seafarers’ Section, Fair Practices committees meet at ITF
Disability should be measured in grades, not days: NLRC

The National Labor Relations Commission (NLRC) has applied the resolution in the previous Crystal Shipping case issued in February last year, to its three latest decisions that ruled that disability is not measured in terms of number of days but by gradings only.

The Philippine Labor Code states that a disability lasting continuously for more than 120 days should be considered "total and permanent disability."

In the Crystal Shipping, (October 2005) and Renouf (April 2006) cases, the Philippine Supreme Court ruled that seafarers are subject to the Labor Code concept of permanent disability. Therefore, in each of these cases, seafarers who were unable to perform their customary work for more than 120 days were awarded the maximum compensation for permanent disability of US$600,000.

In February 2007, the Supreme Court issued a resolution that clarified that medical assessment, rather than the reckoning of days of incapacity should determine the degree of disability in POEA claims.

The London Steamship Mutual P&I Club on its website said that as Del Rosario & Del Rosario & Del Rosario have reported three recent NLRC decisions which correctly follow the Supreme Court’s resolution, the law firm remains "hopeful that future awards under the POEA will apply consistently the medical gradings evaluated under the seafarers’ employment terms.”

(Source: Balitang Marino)

Japan, U.S. to set up new radioactive screening system at Yokohama port

Japan and the United States have agreed to introduce a cargo-screening system at Yokohama port to detect radioactive materials, according to a U.S. government source. The two governments have been discussing Japan’s participation in the U.S. MegaPorts Initiative to screen U.S.-bound cargo for radioactive materials to help block nuclear terrorist attacks in the United States.

The Bush administration signed an agreement to participate in the initiative, led by the U.S. National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), as imperative given that the country is a hub for Asia and started urging Tokyo two years ago to join the screening network. The United States values the agreement as a big step in bilateral cooperation and wants to deepen cooperation in the fight against nuclear terrorism, the source said, adding the two governments have agreed to set up equipment in Yokohama to detect radioactive materials in a bid to prevent smuggling of fissionable materials such as plutonium.

Japan will purchase the equipment from the United States, and the NNSA will provide technical assistance, with screening information shared by the two countries, the source said. Cargo export-bound to the United States as well as shipments imported into Japan will be screened.

The MegaPorts Initiative is part of the United States’ efforts to prevent the inflow of nuclear materials by tightening cargo inspections at the ports of exporter countries. Screenings are currently being conducted in 12 countries. (Source: Japan Times July 1, 2008)

U.S. P&I calls manpower shortage a ‘time bomb’

The American P&I Club’s magazine, Currents, says that the global maritime manpow-er shortage is a “time bomb” that threatens to disrupt shipping operations severely in the near future.

Former mariner Richard Gayton who is the principal surveyor at Shipowners Claims Bureau Inc., the club’s managing group, emphasizes the importance of retaining good crew. Meanwhile, the shipping industry is now looking to China to fulfill its crewing needs for the future.

Chinese sources indicate that owners and crewing agencies are targeting the inland provinces to recruit, and some of the larger companies are heading up recruitment efforts in the inland provinces to recruit, and some of the larger companies are heading up recruitment efforts.

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Make effort to manage your anger

Controlling your temper isn’t always easy. But these effective anger management techniques will help you give the upper hand.

If your outbursts, rages or bullying are negatively affecting relationships with family, friends, co-workers and even complete strangers, it’s time to change the way you express your anger. You can take steps on your own to improve your anger management.

Here are some anger management tips to help get your anger under control:

- Take a “time out.” Although it may seem cliché, counting to 10 before reacting, or leaving the situation altogether, can really defuse your temper.
- Do something physically exerting. Physical activity can provide an outlet for your emotions, especially if you’re about to erupt. Go for a brisk walk or a run, swim, lift weights or shoot baskets.
- Find ways to calm and soothe yourself. Practice deep-breathing exercises, visualize a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase to yourself, such as “take it easy.” You can also listen to music, paint, write in a journal or do yoga.
- Once you’re calm, express your anger as soon as possible so that you aren’t left stewing. If you simply can’t express your anger in a controlled manner to the person who angered you, try talking to a shipmate, friend, counselor or another trusted person.
- Think carefully before you say anything so that you don’t end up saying something you’ll regret. Write a script and rehearse it so that you can stick to the issues.
- Work with the person who angered you to identify solutions to the situation.
- Use “I” statements when describing the problem to avoid criticizing or placing blame. For instance, say “I’m upset you didn’t help with the shipwork this evening,” instead of “You should have helped with the shipwork.” To do otherwise will likely upset the other person and escalate tensions.
- Don’t hold a grudge. Forgive the other person. It’s unrealistic to expect everyone to behave exactly as you want.
- Use humor to release tensions, such as imagining yourself or the other person in silly situations. Don’t use sarcasm, though – it’s just another form of unhealthy expression.
- Keep an anger log to identify the kinds of situations that set you off and to monitor your reactions.
- Practice relaxation skills. Learning skills to relax and de-stress can also help control your temper when it may flare up.
- It may take some time and intense effort to put these tips into practice when you’re facing situations that typically send you into a rage. In the heat of the moment, it can be hard to remember your coping strategies.
- You may need to keep something with you that serves as a reminder to step back from the situation in order to get your anger under control. For instance, you may want to keep a small, smooth stone in your pocket or a scrap of paper with your tips written down.
- With due diligence, these anger management techniques will come more naturally and you’ll no longer need such reminders.

You can practice many of these anger management strategies on your own. But if your anger seems out of control, is hurting your relationships or has escalated into violence, you may benefit from seeing a therapist or an anger management professional.

Role-playing in controlled situations, such as anger management classes, can help you practice your techniques. (Source: NetDoc)

VOICES from SEAFARERS

I hope that the JSU continues to widen its activities and support for its members. I advise everybody to save and be wise in spending their hard-earned wages. Take good care of yourselves, maintain your good habits and health.

- Mosiman Cristina Plata

M/V RAKIURA MARU

We salute the JSU! In our minds the JSU is the real union to protect our rights. We look forward to your continued mission to organize more seafarers. More Power!!!

- Capt. Herminio Las Pinas and C/E Edralyn Anciro

M/V ATLANTIC ERICA

There is another theory which states that if anybody discovers exactly what the universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable.

- Douglas Adams

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There is another theory which states that this has already happened.

- British author, comedian and musician

JOKE CORNER

Pearl Harvest

An elderly couple was on a cruise ship on a stormy night. They were standing on the back of the ship watching the moon, when a big wave came up and washed the old woman overboard. They searched for days but couldn’t find her, so the captain sent the old man back to shore with the promise that he would notify him as soon as they found something.

Three weeks went by and finally the old man got a fax from the ship. It read: Sir, we regret to inform you that we found your wife dead at the bottom of the sea. We hauled her up to the deck and attached to her butt was an oyster. Inside it was a pearl worth $50,000. Please advise...

- Captain

The old man faxed back: Send me the pearl and re-bait the trap.

- Source: Jokequeen

With the shortage of seafarers now, the young ratings should strive to become officers by taking the examination when they have the chance. We thank the JSU for the support in the advancement of Filipino seafarers. The computers for the walk-in examination is a big help to the seafarers.

- Cap. Arturo V. Plaza

M/V Trans Pacific 8

We thank the JSU for providing us reading material, union updates, and news regarding the shipping industry. Your regular visitation is a big encouragement to us.

- Crewmembers of M/V KOHO

I would like to encourage all Filipino seafarers to work hard for the benefit of the Philippine manning industry, as well as for the Japanese shipowners.

- Cap. Arturo V. Plaza

M/V CAPES OLIVE

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- Crewmembers of M/V CAPE OLIVE

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Pollution standards to affect ships entering GCC waters

Ships entering the territorial waters of GCC states will have to strictly comply with international pollution standards from next month. The new rule comes in the wake of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO) decision to list Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in its “special area.”

The IMO’s decision to list the Gulf area in the special category is in line with the MAPROL Convention (International convention covering prevention of pollution from ships 1973/78) that envisaged combating marine pollution in coastal waters.

A meeting of GCC environment ministers called on all member countries to ensure that they strictly adhere to the international and regional guidelines to combat their territorial waters pollution-free.

The GCC ministers’ meeting ratified the more than 40 Green Initiatives identified at the Doha meeting in 2007.

Delivering the opening address, Qatar’s Minister of Environment, H E Abdullah bin Mubarak bin Aaboud Al Midhathi, said the emerging piracy, armed robbery and terrorist attacks in Somalia and Nigeria; EECS solutions are in the process of adopting the carriage rule against merchant vessels are risks similar to those posed by warlike operations;

BELEEVES that existing national structures have proved incapable of dealing with the new reality and often appear unable and unwilling to consider risks in an objective way and have shown themselves incapable of taking the needed decisions to protect seafarers for fear of being criticized by the wider maritime industry.

CONSIDERS that there is therefore time that an international forum be created to act as a focal point for discussions and information sharing about threats to seafarers emanating from piracy, armed robbery, terrorism and warlike operations and to coordinate a worldwide shipping industry response;

URGES the ITF to enter discussions with international shipowner organizations to achieve that objective with the aim of disseminating appropriate advice and measures to protect seafarers and, on the basis of joint agreed objectives, in the ambit of structures established to consider issues relating to the declaration of areas of warlike operations or war zones.

NOTES also that the insurance and P&I brokers are in the process of adapting the coverage they provide to the shipping industry to take account of these developments, which is why no case of attack is deemed to be high, as “warlike operations areas.”

IMO to make ECDIS carriage rule

Mandatory carriage of ECDIS will become a reality, following agreements reached at a meeting at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on July 2.

The precise wording of the proposed amendments to SOLAS remains to be worked out but the main points have been agreed upon as a recommendation to MSC 85 later in the year.

The industry is being given a long lead time to get used to the idea of ECDIS carriage, with the effective date being January 2012.

All new passenger ships of 500 g/t and above, and tankers of 3,000 g/t and above built for international voyages will be required to carry ECDIS.

The precise details of the ship categories and exemptions are still being resolved, but the Nav 54 delegates were unanimous in their decision that ECDIS should become mandatory. (Source: IMO)

By Bayani A. Jabol
JSU Union Officer

Sexual harassment hap- pens not only in land-based workplaces but also onboard ships. Although such cases are seldom reported. Most ships are still manned by all-male seafarers, which may be the reason why few sexual harassment incidents are committed (or reported).

However, it is common knowledge that sexual harassment does happen onboard. Recently, one of our ISS received a call for assistance related to sexual harassment, which we hope will be a case study not only for the union but for companies as well.

But first let us understand what constitutes sexual harassment.

**What to do if you are sexually harassed**

Rejection is important. If you are sexually harassed and feel unpleasant, it is important that you manifest the intention of rejection, indicating to the harasser that it is sexual harassment. Patience and ignorance may make the matter worse.

Contact your union or your company’s HR department to solve the problem alone. Consult immediately with the other officers onboard to figure out the necessary actions or consult either your company or the union to help you solve the problem.

Further, if you are sexually harassed, it may help you to record the spacer of sexual harassment (such as the time, the harasser and the place of harassment, as well as how you felt and whether there were other people around, for later consultation and complaint purposes).

Related ISS report:

Sometime in June, a call from a rating-crewmember was received by one of our ISS assigned in Kobe, Japan. Apparently, an officer who was under the influence of alcohol offered the rating money in exchange for sexual favor, which the rating flatly rejected.

However, after a few hours the officer examined the rating to his cabin and offered the rating a drink. When the rating accepted the drink, the officer touched the rating’s private parts and offered an amount of US$300 as a monthly sexual relationship.

Because of the rating’s rejection of the offer, his expected promotion was not approved and was also informed that his crew would be replaced upon arrival in the next port since he has already served 8 months onboard and could be considered to have completed his contract.

The JSU, alarmed by this forbidding action of an officer, has recommended company to dismiss the officer, who has been onboard for five months, upon the ship’s arrival at the next port.

**Understanding, dealing with sexual harassment**

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