



VSUP committee holds 40th meeting

The Vietnamese Seafarers Upgrading Project (VSUP) Management Committee convened its 40th meeting June 2, while 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 19th 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 Viet-



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.

namese 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.

JSU attends ceremonies in Tianjin

Ten guests from Japan and 23 from China attended the 11th commencement and 12th matriculation ceremonies in Tianjin on June 11 for 39 students, both graduating and new.

All Japan Seamen's Union (JSU) President Yoji Fujisawa presented a one million yen donation to President Li Tieqiao of the National Committee of Chinese Seaman & Construction Workers Union (CSU) for victims of the recent earthquake in Sichuan province.

President Li thanked President Fujisawa and presented him with a certificate of appreciation.

In the afternoon of the same day, JSU President Fujisawa and CSU President Li, who had just assumed his new post, held a summit meeting at the Ocean Hotel Tianjin to discuss the challenges of ongoing projects and possible solutions.

They agreed to develop a system in which Chinese seamen could be employed onboard Japanese commercial vessels to help offset manning shortages at Japanese shipping companies.

Other than the projects being carried out in Tianjin, an agreement was reached on the planned establishment of a general training and education center in Dalian, where the curriculum would not only include English lessons, but also required marine training and ship-management duties for Chinese seamen working onboard Japanese ships.

The union leaders also decided to promote the development of human resources in order to deal with demand for seamen by the Japanese commercial fleet.

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 overland 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



The FPC meeting room. Inset: the JSU delegation led by President Yoji Fujisawa at the FPC meeting.

developments; the IMO and minimum number of crewmen; the maintenance of seafarer capabilities; crimes committed by seamen and fair treatment; safety and health; and global organization.

As for ratings from developed economies (DERs), 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

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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 Remigio (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 cus-

tomary work for more than 120 days were awarded the maximum compensation for permanent disability of US\$60,000.

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

The London Steamship Mutual P&I Club on its Web site said that as 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)

IMO praises UN's adoption of new anti-piracy resolution

IMO Secretary-General Efthymios E. Mitropoulos has welcomed the United Nations Security Council's adoption of a resolution authorizing a series of decisive measures to combat acts of piracy and armed robbery against vessels off the coast of Somalia.



Mitropoulos

Under the terms of Resolution 1816 (2008), which was adopted unanimously, the Security Council decided that, following receipt of a letter from Somalia to the President of the UN Security Council giving the consent of Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), states cooperating with the TFG would be allowed, for a period of six months, to enter the country's territorial waters and use "all necessary means" to repress acts of

piracy and armed robbery at sea, in a manner consistent with relevant provisions of international law.

This latest move comes after more than two years of intensive effort by the IMO to bring this matter to the attention of the Security Council and to urge concerted action, culminating in the adoption, last November, of a second IMO Assembly resolution on the subject.

In welcoming the Security Council resolution, Mitropoulos said that firm action was needed, since the current situation was stifling the flow of much-needed aid to the people of Somalia, jeopardizing the lives of innocent seafarers, fishers and passengers, and adversely affecting international trade.

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made by the JSU, were approved unanimously.

Also approved were a list of agreements set forth by the ITF for fiscal 2008, reports on inspections made by ITF inspectors in fiscal 2007 and a financial report on the ITF's welfare and benefits.

Five shipping companies, including Japan's Dowa Line, were confirmed as future campaign targets, and agreement was reached to make relevant efforts.

During the meetings, ITF executives held high-level meetings with the leaders and sub-leaders of the Seafarers' and Dockworkers' sections, exchanging views on future ITF activities after the global assembly in 2010. (See resolutions on page 4)

JSU MAKES BEACH SHIPSHAPE



Every year, as we celebrate Marine Day, JSU's various branches come together to join in on activities aimed at cleaning up the beaches and the sea. The picture above is of JSU staff from the Kansai Regional Branch led by its chief, Nagaoki Okamoto.

They cleaned up Suma Beach in Kobe, before its opening to the public.

The JSU calls on all seafarers to help protect the sea and make it pollution-free for the benefit of everybody.

This year, as Japan celebrates Marine Day, we encourage everybody, especially all JSU members, to contribute to the betterment of the environment and the sea, not only on Marine Day, but throughout the entire year. (ISS Ernesto Quijano)

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 sees Japan's participation 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 fissile 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 exported 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 manpower 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 headquartering their

manning bases in these inland areas. These are relatively poor and the salaries offered are still attractive to younger people. According to the Shanghai office of the American Club's managers, quoting the Ministry of Communications, China has the most populous crew force in the world. At the end of 2006, there were 1.5 million crewmembers working on vessels, including 510,000 on seagoing vessels.

The P&I market, says Capt. Gayton, is also concerned about the impending shortage of experienced, well-trained officers. The IMO has recently been under pressure to address training concerns, and currently has its Stan-

dards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping 95 convention under review. "However, these standards are minimum ones and actual training programs worldwide differ significantly."

Gayton asserts that this worsening crisis can only be avoided if extraordinary measures are taken now. "A culture of safety and operational integrity needs to be promoted, and the shipowner must focus on recruitment, training and retention programs if any progress is to be made."

"If these immediate goals are not met, then owners will inevitably face significantly increased insurance premiums as the industry struggles to keep pace with claims."

Make effort to manage your anger

Controlling your temper isn't always easy. But these effective anger management techniques will help give you 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 psychotherapist 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



Crewmembers of **M/V ATLANTIC ERICA**

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 of **M/V CAPE OLIVE**

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.

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.

Messman Cristian Platon
M/V RAKIURA MARU



Crewmembers of **M/V KOHO**

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.

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.

Capt. Arturo V. Plaza
M/V Trans Pacific 8



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

There is a 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.

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

– Douglas Adams –
1952-2001

British author, comedian and musician

Understanding, dealing with sexual harassment

By **Bayani A. Jaboli**
JSU Union Officer

Sexual harassment happens 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.

Question: What is sexual

harassment in the workplace?

Answer: The Equal Employment Office, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (Government of Japan) refers to sexual harassment as conducting sexual remarks and behaviors against a worker's will, the refusal of which may cause disadvantage in his/her working conditions such as dismissal, demotion and pay cut, and/or which leads to serious negative effect on his/her working capacity due to the unpleasant environment caused by such harassment.

Sexual harassment includes:

- Enforcement of sexual relationship
- Unnecessary physical contact
- Sexual jokes and kidding
- Deliberate circulation of

sexual rumor

- Distribution of indecent pictures
- Asking questions about your sexual life
- Persistent invitation to meals and dates

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. Do not try 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 specific situations of 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 summoned 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 a month for a sexual relationship. The rating again refused and ran outside of the officer's cabin.

Because of the rating's rejection of the offer, his expected promotion was not approved and was also informed that he will 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, informed the ship's company immediately. The company promised to dismiss the officer, who has been onboard for five months, upon the ship's arrival at the next port.

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 starting from next month. The new rule comes in the wake of the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) decision to list Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, Kuwait, 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 MARPOL Convention (International convention covering prevention of pollution from ships 1973\78) that envisaged combating marine pol-

lution 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 keep 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 Midhadhi, said the emerging ecological challenges could not be combated by individual countries in the region.

He stressed the need for the member countries to strictly follow national and international guidelines for protecting the environment.

GCC Secretary-General H E Abdulrahman bin Hamad Al Attiyah, said each member in the GCC was a signatory to the MARPOL convention and some of them had already honored their commitments regarding the Convention. He urged the members to honor other regulations related to a series of joint environmental action programs, including those on radiation and nuclear risks.

The ministers also discussed a series of regional and

international conventions on the environment, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on preservation of wildlife and natural habitats in the region, Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the Montreal Protocol.

With regards to the GCC Green Initiatives, it was decided at the meeting to implement nine "high priority" projects in a year. The next set of 12 projects will be implemented the following year. The GCC environment ministers will hold their next meeting in Oman. (Source: *Shiptalk*)

IMO agrees to make ECDIS carriage rule

Mandatory carriage of ECDIS will become a reality, following agreements reached at the Nav 54 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 July 1, 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*)

RESOLUTIONS FROM ITF'S SEAFARERS' SECTION CONFERENCE

There was a motion seeking to establish and organize an ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) Seafarers' ad-hoc process to exchange information, data, know-how and technology for the professional career development of seafarers.

The Seafarers' Section Conference at its meeting in Stockholm on June 16-17, 2008,

ACKNOWLEDGES the continuing critical shortage of marine officers and skilled ratings, which the 2005 BIMCO/ISF Manpower Update Report estimated to reach 27,000 officers by the year 2015;

CONSIDERS that competent and professional seafarers from all regions, whether officers or ratings, in recognition of the physical demands and the technical nature of their work, should be constantly developed;

BELIEVES that the seafaring profession must offer clear and effective ways for career advancement, to be able to harness this tremendous human resource potential through proper education, training, licensing and certification;

NOTES that one of the concerns regarding seafarers' education and training was the need to increase the sharing of information about seafarer matters;

FURTHER NOTES the need to increase the Maritime industry's ability to retain seafarers from all regions;

CALLS UPON the ITF Secretariat to examine cost effective means to collect and disseminate information on the recruitment, retention, shortage and career paths of seafarers and to take steps to develop a strategy to respond to this issue.

* * *

ITF's Seafarers' Section Conference in Stockholm, held on June 16-17, 2008,

NOTES with concern the trend toward increased use of violence by pirates and other assailants in attacks against merchant ships in piracy hotspots worldwide and in particular, Somalia and Nigeria;

BELIEVES there is sufficient evidence to warrant a conclusion that piracy, armed robbery and terrorist attacks against merchant ships are phenomena that are frequently linked and perpetrated by organizations with links to governments, or with political objectives, and which consequently warrant consideration within 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 industries are in the process of adapting the coverage they provide to the shipping industry to take account of these developments, which is indicative that they too appear to concur that piracy, armed robbery and terrorist attacks

against merchant vessels are risks similar to those posed by warlike operations;

BELIEVES 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 it is therefore time that an international forum be created to act as a focal point for discussions and information exchange 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 into 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 jointly agreed objective criteria, declaring areas of warlike operations as deemed appropriate;

FURTHERMORE, in the absence of progressive engagement with international shipowner representatives, urges the ITF to declare piracy hotspots, and areas where attacks against merchant ships and seafarers are prevalent or the risk of attack is determined to be high, as "warlike operations areas."

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

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