AMOSUP welcomes future members
1st Annual Essay Writing Contest

GREGORIO OCA LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION INC.

CONTEST DETAILS

Starts on June 25, 2013
Ends on August 31, 2013

Who can join?

Open to children of seafarers age 10-12 years (elementary level) or older;
12 - 17 years (high school level) or older;
16 - 23 years (college level), except the officers and employees of the GOLD Foundation and their relatives up to the third degree of consanguinity.

The face of the seafarer... ...a PARENT

I am proud to be the child of a Filipino Seafarer

We are both the BEST that we can be.

RAFFLE PRIZES for Elementary, High School, and College Level

1st Prize: PHP30,000.00
2nd Prize: PHP20,000.00
3rd Prize: PHP10,000.00

Winners based in provinces will be flown to Manila with their parents.

VALUES PROMOTED
Communication
Integrity
RESPECT
Love for Family

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Sailing Forward
Welcome aboard our maiden issue of Sailing Forward.

It is with great pride and pleasure that we bring you one of the most effective tools of communications to connect this leadership with the mass base of our union membership.

As part of our services we feel that the publication of Sailing Forward would provide us a more vital link to establishing communications with our members, not only about developments in the organisation, but with the entire maritime industry as well.

The publication aims to share our goals of educating and informing the broad range of our readers about our union activities, as we maintain and continue the duties to explore and execute projects that are of great benefit to AMOSUP union members. We count on our partners in the industry, especially the maritime employers and government regulators, in achieving these goals.

As we look (and are sailing) forward to more events-filled years, we see the publication serving as chronicler of the union’s continuing efforts and achievements in protecting the rights and promoting the welfare of members. Some of these have already begun -- most recently with the extension of our medical and hospitalisation services to seafarers in north Luzon, the completion of a sports complex in Mandaue City in Cebu last December and the opening of the Sailor’s Home Annex in Manila, which we inaugurated early this year.

The publication’s release comes at a most auspicious time as we celebrate the 11th commencement exercises of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), which is our cover story. This gives us an opportunity to express my best wishes to the 366-member graduating Class of 2013. You will surely be Sailing Forward as you leave the Academy -- armed with the lessons and wisdom of the last four years.

Sailing Forward will serve as a conduit of knowledge and information to the shipping industry, whose progress has gone in cycle from good to worse and vice versa over the years. We have witnessed such changes in the industry that surely have an impact even to the largest maritime union in Asia and the Pacific.

As those developments unfold, we cannot remain passive over significant events that are of interest to the Union, as well as to the whole shipping industry. This news organ surely is one vehicle that will actively track down, record, and preserve momentous events and undertakings. Through Sailing Forward we then have established a hub of news and information that will ensure our active role in the marketplace of ideas and opinions that can shape union policies in relation to key global developments.

Having a news organ like Sailing Forward brings also a “minimum core obligation” of the Union to its members under the Seafarers’ charter policy which the ITF adopted during its 42nd congress in Mexico City in August 2010.

Sailing Forward affirms AMOSUP’s commitment to continue the legacy of our late Founding President Capt. Gregorio S. Oca, whose life work was to ensure that Filipino seafarers will always be acknowledged as world-class maritime professionals.

Happy Sailing Forward!

Yours faithfully,

Dr. Conrado F. Oca

Sailing Forward
AMOSUP expands medical services to north Luzon
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Cebu members enjoy new sports facilities

Psycho-social counselling for piracy victims launched
AMOSUP has signed an agreement with a government-run workers welfare agency to collaborate and undertake psycho-social counselling for seafarers who are victims of piracy and other sea disasters.

Teaching seafarers to improve their lifestyle, business skills

DVD pack to entertain, inform members onboard
AMOSUP has commissioned a production outfit to produce and release a DVD pack that can inform and entertain union members while on board ships sailing in various parts of the world.
5 Shipowners, unions raise concern at casualty reporting failures

Shipowners and seafarers’ unions have joined forces to press concern at flag states’ failure to submit timely casualty reports as required under international Conventions.

6 A new home away from home

AMOSUP’s recent building inauguration has opened another milestone in providing shelter to seafarers who seek a place to stay while in transit to or from signing off their ships.

8 Manila provides for foreign crew

For many years, Manila did not have a ‘drop-in’ facility for foreign seafarers that could accommodate them when their ships call at the port. They face the risks in going directly to restaurants, bars or other establishments that are not close to the port with very little knowledge of the area.

9 Members receive Pangkabuhayan fund

AMOSUP’s Pangkabuhayan Program has benefited thousands of seafarers since the launching of the live-in program to promote entrepreneurial spirits among union members.

10 MAAP, Incheon National Maritime clinch scholarship accord

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) and Incheon National Maritime (INM) High School have entered into a memorandum of agreement for international relationship and cooperation.

10 AMOSUP rep named to POEA Governing Board seat

AMOSUP's representative has been appointed to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration’s (POEA) Governing Board to represent the interests of seafarers.

20 Non-crewing work clause

AMOSUP brings to the attention of its members the non-crewing work clause which allows them to take on additional work without exceeding their working hours.

21 FAQs on members hospital benefits

AMOSUP provides details on hospitalisation, treatment and medicines free of charge to qualified members and their dependents.

About the cover
A crew on board oceangoing ship
Photo by: Wig Tysmans
AMOSUP expands medical services to north Luzon

AMOSUP has extended its medical services to union members and their qualified dependents in northern Luzon, by setting up a satellite clinic in a hospital based in Dagupan City.

The union recently agreed to engage the services of Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Memorial Hospital, by utilising space in the first floor of its Medical Arts Tower building for five years.

The hospital is staffed by accredited medical practitioners and specialists, to have AMOSUP members and their dependents avail of the hospital facilities and equipment referred by the union’s retained medical doctors.

The medical services that Dagupan Doctors can render include medical examination, treatment and other hospital and pharmaceutical services both on outpatient and in-patient bases.

Rendering medical, pharmaceutical and diagnostic services to members will be limited to the schedule of services listed and the availability of such within Dagupan Doctors.

In special cases requiring special procedures not covered by the medical coverage plan of AMOSUP, however, the Dagupan Doctors will advise AMOSUP of the case and to seek its prior approval to proceed.
Cebu members enjoy new sports facilities  
Davao to follow suit

Union members and their dependents in the central part of the country are now enjoying new recreation facilities, with the completion of a sports complex in Cebu.

The newly constructed AMOSUP Cebu’s sports facilities have a covered basketball court and swimming pool, complete with amenities catering to the enjoyment and relaxation of union members and dependents. It also has its own gym room where weights and resistance training can be done, including treadmill and exercise machines.

Beside the gym is a game room where kids and adults can play chess, table tennis, hockey and football. It has also sports bar where members and dependents can dine with leisure and relaxation. The sports complex also includes a Kiddie room where small children can play or read children’s books.

Located at AMOSUP Compound, Umapad in Mandaue City, the construction of the sports complex was completed in November last year.

AMOSUP president, Dr. Conrado F. Oca saw the need to foster relationship between union members and their dependents through recreational facility where they could spend time and enjoy. So in the midst of 2011, he conceptualized the sports complex that would serve both as a leisure and recreational facility.

In no time, after an eight month construction that began in summer of last year the facilities became a reality. An inauguration last December saw Rev. Fr. Okafor Ilozue Martin and Dr. Oca leading the opening of the sports facilities for AMOSUP Cebu.

More than 300 members and their dependents to date have visited and used the sports complex for their leisure and recreation, which is open from Monday to Saturday, from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Similarly, members in Davao will soon experience to enjoy the same recreation facilities when it constructs its own.

The proposed two-storey sports complex will also have a swimming pool, with male and female lockers. It will also have its kids’ room where children of AMOSUP members can play.

The Davao facilities also have their game room for adults, a gym, and rehabilitation for physical therapy purposes, including a snack bar.

The second floor will house a multi-purpose hall/function room that can accommodate up to 180 persons.
MAAP graduation: AMOSUP welcomes future members

The aspiring ship officers from one of the country’s leading maritime schools are about to embark on new challenges when they sail away aboard their ships upon leaving the academy middle of this year.

These senior cadets from the Union-run Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), which holds its graduation ceremonies in June, eventually find their way to membership in the union’s roster of ship officers which forms the very core of AMOSUP existence as an organised maritime labour group.

Consequently, this future belonging also forms part of the manpower asset in building up AMOSUP membership base, whose partnership with marine employers, became responsible for the cadets’ successful education at MAAP. The academy nurtured this year’s class of 366 senior cadets into four years of quality education and training as it has consistently done to its past graduates over the years.

Since 2003, MAAP has graduated about 1,500 ship officers - 68 of them women - who now work on board different types of oceangoing ships. Others have preferred to work ashore, serving at ship management firms and in teaching and supervisory posts in the academy.

Over the years the academy has lived up to its mission of providing quality education and training to midshipmen and women for the development of qualified and competent mariners who possess the character, knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a career in the maritime industry.

MAAP president, retired Navy Vice Admiral Eduardo Ma. R. Santos, says the academy’s graduates have easily progressed into their maritime career as some of them already obtained their masters’ and chief engineers’ tickets.

“Theyir achievements are quite above normal compared with other officers of different maritime schools,” says VAdm. Santos, noting that most of the graduates had climbed up the ladder of the profession at a very young age. Everyone is working on board ships, even those who had encountered accidents, but fit to work.

He says MAAP has started to double enrolment since 2009, and it may increase further in the coming years depending on world trade demand as newbuilding orders get delivered. However, admission to the school is tied up to a limit of 500 cadets each year, on a 25-student per classroom ratio.

This set up is geared towards quality education that MAAP has committed to client shipowners and shipmanagers. It is the only employer-union funded marine institution in the Philippines that serves as a non-stock, non profit venture dedicated to meet the vital requirements for officers of foreign shipping companies.

The demand for Filipino seafarers is always there. This time an increase in crewing requirement in offshore
industry for oil and gas; Admiral Santos stressed, is of particular interest which requires a re-direction of some technological focus in operating ships.

Tugs, liftboat and supply vessels, which are the offshore industry’s mode of transport, have had increased training activities at other institutions especially in dealing with the transport and logistics needs of offshore platforms, offshore jackets, piles and pipe laying equipment.

At MAAP, new courses that are compliant with the IMO requirements have been launched already.

Stressing that graduates also gain the privilege of further training in school, Admiral Santos cited the need to establish post graduate courses. MAAP intends to encourage those who have spent sea time to take up master’s degree, which leads to a major in ship superintendent as CHED has approved.

The 103-hectare academy at Kamaya Point, Mariveles, Bataan is now in the process of expanding its training facilities and equipment to accommodate the growing number of cadets in future.

This year, 12,000 applicants took the school’s qualifying tests from 45 testing centres nationwide. The school finds it easier to look for “good candidates for enrolment” through a memorandum of agreement with public and private schools since the testing centres are back up by parents and alumni in search for candidates.

A qualified candidate gets a scholarship grant, free board and lodging, in-house shipboard training (three months), use of modern equipment and facilities and lucrative employment onboard foreign shipping companies after graduation, among others.

MAAP, Incheon National Maritime clinch scholarship accord

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) and Incheon National Maritime (INM) High School have entered into a memorandum of agreement for international relationship and cooperation.

The agreement anchors on MAAP’s support to a recent Commission on Higher Education (CHED) implementation of the Senior High School Modelling in selected secondary schools under the K to 12 education programme.

MAAP has initially recommended 12 (six each for deck and engine departments) of its admitted students belonging to Class 2017 who are “committed and capable” Filipino scholars, with consent of their respective guardians to study Grade 11 and 12 for two years (Grades 10 and 11 at INM) in South Korea. It will be subject to scrutiny by INM beginning this year. The scholars will also have the chance to learn Korean language, culture and history as part of their maritime competency.

Under the agreement, the INM as ‘sponsor’, will shoulder expenses of students for air-fare, economy tickets to Korea and back to the Philippines, accommodation in INM dormitory, foster parents in Korea on weekends for the home-stay and cultural exchange with the Filipino scholars.

It also includes free full meals, full tuition fees, book and school supply allowance, uniform, annual medical and insurance benefits while in Korea and to award an INM certificate after having successfully accomplished the Grade 11 and 12 studies.

MAAP, as the proponent of the project, will have to submit each semester’s project report of the activities to DepEd and other concerned agencies like CHED Office of Program and Standards, and present final report immediately after the project.

The agreement runs in line with INM’s desire to participate in the Senior high School Modelling Program pilot test scholars for Grades 11 and 12, in which MAAP submitted a project proposal last December and consequently approved by CHED.

Established in 1979, the government-run secondary school in South Korea is recognised by Korea Ministry of Education, Science and Technology as ‘Master High School’ for nurturing the creative young Meister to meet the needs of various fields of the maritime industry. The school has an awesome landscape, high placement rate, homelike student dormitories and 100% scholarship rate.

MAAP president Eduardo Ma. R. Santos and INM principal Mr. Kim Myeong Sik signed the accord at the MAAP campus in Mariveles, Bataan. The recent signing of memorandum of agreement was witnessed by MAAP and INM officials and representatives from the Philippines’ Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).
Union rep named to POEA Governing Board seat

**OWWA appointment came in first**

most recent of which was the standard employment contract, which contains provisions that protect seafarers.

“Our resumption of sharing leadership from AMOSUP (in the Governing Board) sees to it that seafarers’ welfare like wages and labour conditions are strongly promoted in the spirit of tripartism,” Oca noted. Being the country’s largest maritime union, whatever policies AMOSUP implements for its membership base affects the country’s seafaring class, he said.

This means that seafarer’s voice will always be heard and economic interest protected whenever negotiation arises before government and employers, Toti Oca says. Though he may not be able to duplicate what Capt Greg had done, Toti stressed that he would continue the vision of what his predecessor had started.

The appointment also bodes well for the administration’s effort to have a sea-based representative in as much as its counterpart from the land-based sector has first maintained the same seat in the POEA Governing Board.

“Our resumption of sharing leadership from AMOSUP (in the Governing Board) sees to it that seafarers’ welfare like wages and labour conditions are strongly promoted in the spirit of tripartism”

**APSRC re-elects chair**

AMOSUP president Dr. Conrado F. Oca was unanimously re-elected for another term of four years by member affiliates as chair of the Asia Pacific Seafarers’ Regional Committee (APSRC) of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) during its meeting last 13 May 2013. Also re-elected as vice chairs were Thomas Tay (SMOU, Singapore), Abdulgani Serang (NUSI, India), and Helen McAra (NZMSG, New Zealand). During that election new committees were created to represent the women and youth sectors. A representative from Indonesia was elected for the women sector while someone from Australia was elected for the youth sector.
Psycho-social counselling for piracy victims launched

AMOSUP has signed an agreement with a government-run workers welfare agency to collaborate and undertake psycho-social counselling for seafarers who are victims of piracy and other sea disasters.

Launched through the initiative of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), the project ‘Ka-linga sa Marino’ or Kalma also aims to provide support to the seafarer’s family, by providing stress management skills and social support networks to fully assist them in such time of crisis.

It will also capture and develop the family’s unique coping mechanisms that maybe helpful in the event the seafarer is held hostage. The crews’ families, who are left behind at home, are equally affected as they anxiously await with great uncertainty the fate of their loved ones.

Under the agreement signed with OWWA, AMOSUP cooperates and coordinates with parties involved in identifying and locating members who have been victimised in the high seas. AMOSUP also needs to provide administrative assistance to OWWA’s Administrative Technical Group when necessary, including inputs in the implementation of the project.

The All Japan Seamen’s Union (JSU) has provided financial assistance to the project, with a budget of PhP15 million a year.

A number of seafarers have experienced pirate attacks and have even held hostage that had caused them greater stress and psychological burden even after they have been released.

That is why they have to be fully assisted after their release, by providing psychological and debriefing. It will also teach the seafarers and their families skills that may help them in the event trauma arise.

In doing so, provincial counsellors will also be mobilised and trained to assist seafarers to cope after experiencing such crisis. OWWA has set up facilities at its offices in Pasay like therapy room to treat and counsel piracy victims and their families.

The project is supported by shipmanagers and crewing agents from International Mariners Management Association of Japan and the Manila-based Joint Manning Group.

So far there have been six seafarers and their families who have availed of the services under this programme.
Teaching seafarers to improve their lifestyle, business skills

Dubbed as 'Handog Para sa Pamilyang Marino', the GOLD Foundation also wanted to provide the opportunities to teach seafarers and their wives or children to do research and ask the benefits of various services being offered by both government and private institutions that have impact in their lives.

There ought to be a compelling need to ensure that Filipino seafarers really enjoy the fruit of their labour. One indication that it is surely achieved is to see them having their lifestyle improving and their business skills working.

The Gregorio Oca Leadership Development (GOLD) Foundation recently began the mission of a proactive task to teach seafarers and their families how to enhance their social and financial well-being.

GOLD launched in April a series of seminars that provided tips to improve oneself – from good grooming and healthy eating habits to knowledge about HIV AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) virus.

A salon owner who is an expert on good grooming and self-presentation for men and women cited ways that could rekindle romantic relationships with their partners. Getting on “how to keep the fire burning in sexual intimacy with their wife is always possible, and it’s the key to a continuing relationship even if you’re miles apart,” she said.

Technology has put them – seafarers or not – to be together with their other half anytime they want in this age of digital divide.

She said that constant communication with families could also be a deterrence for seafarers from seeking sexual contact outside of their marriage while on shore leave or at ports. Thus, they could do away with the possibility of contracting HIV AIDS, as the dreaded disease is rapidly expanding worldwide.

Among overseas Filipino workers, seafarers are one of the most potential carriers of the virus each time they pay for sexual services, especially with unprotected sex. This could be the reason why AIDS virus has been a hot issue in the seafaring sector.

The Philippines ranks ninth among countries with rapidly increasing cases of the disease. Studies show that Filipinos possess high level of awareness about HIV AIDS, but they have gained inadequate knowledge about it.

It is unfortunate that some manning agencies are neglecting HIV AIDS education in their pre-departure orientation seminars (PDOS) for their officers and crew.

Participants to the GOLD workshops were not surprised when organisers during the forum introduced persons with AIDS. One of them was a seafarer who narrated his experience about how he had contracted the virus. He and his wife were devastated after learning that he was tested positive of the syndrome as the husband could no longer leave to work for his next ship.

The two-day GOLD workshops have also taught seafarers the need to improve their financial stability by saving for the future and how to become successful entrepreneurs.

Dubbed as 'Handog Para sa Pamilyang Marino', the Foundation also wanted to provide opportunities to teach seafarers and their wives or children to do research and ask the benefits of various services being offered by both government and private institutions that have impact in their lives.
Consequently, the occasion has been a great opportunity for state agencies like OWWA and Phihealth to explain the welfare and medical benefits, which seafarers and their families receive once they need them. Likewise, private companies like property managers and financial institutions had a field day in marketing their products and services for investments to one of their “most able” target clients – the seafarers.

The country’s seafaring industry is one of the highest income remitters to the local economy. Businesswise, however, many in the maritime labour front are not keen to approach or patronise banks for financial support for possible business ventures. So bank executives have been invited to speak and encourage the sea-based workers to pursue whatever entrepreneurial skills they have and to teach them the proper way to access for the much needed capital.

Franchising like in food and medical products is one of the trends in setting up business nowadays.

Seafarers and their wives have been told that investment in franchising has a 90% success rate. They have also been told which product is well earning.

“Some of the challenges is you have to follow what the franchisor’s want,” says an owner who is into the business. And that what makes its success rate high, he adds, saying “you will be guided by the franchisor to attain the goal that you want for the business.”

In franchising, continuous training like operational and administrative tasks is provided to the franchisee. Loans are being offered to an interested individual or group which really makes it a lovely opportunity.

The workshop may have convinced seafarers on what the GOLD Foundation wants to share, which is: Now is the right time to change mariners’ lifestyle and attain what they deserve in life. But in the end, one has to live with the realities that “One is obliged to manage his/her personal finances” and “No one gets employed for life.”

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**DVD pack to entertain, inform members onboard**

AMOSUP has commissioned a production outfit to produce and release a DVD pack that can inform and entertain union members while on board ships sailing in various parts of the world.

The DVD, which will be updated and distributed monthly to AMOSUP member vessels, has been produced not only to entertain but to update members about various issues in the industry and relevant information regarding AMOSUP programme.

Committed to the welfare and development of the Filipino seafarer, AMOSUP seeks to provide benefits that enhance the union member’s life.

STIMULA Production, which has partnered with AMOSUP for the DVD release on a monthly basis beginning this 2013, is engaged in the business of producing quality shows such as Yan Ang Marino. It possesses the necessary tools and equipment in producing video materials.

For this DVD project, STIMULA has entered into an agreement with other independent producers to reproduce their shows.

The DVD contains different programs like a segment called ‘Amosup Time’, which tackles and discusses all pertinent information about the union, so that members will fully understand their benefits and keep them updated on AMOSUP’s projects.

Special reports on current events in the local and international maritime industry are also part of the DVD that keeps seafarers onboard connected to what is happening ashore.
Special episodes showcase talented seafarers’ family members to inspire the crew as they watch their families perform song and dances for them. Some episodes have short films with themes that are significant to seafarers’ lives.

The first seven volumes have highlighted the benefits given by AMOSUP to Filipino seafarers and their families. It first came out in June 2012.

AMOSUP Time helps seafarers get to know the union better and strengthens their ties with the union.

Other contents of the DVD include:

**Yan ang Marino.** Yan ang Marino is the first television show dedicated for the Filipino seafarers. Hosted by Maresciai Yao and AMOSUP Executive Vice President and MAAP President, Vice Admiral Ma. R. Eduardo Santos on PTV channel 4. This Anak TV Sealed program acknowledges the exceptional contribution of the seafarers to their families, to the economy and to the society. It informs and inspires not just seafarers and their families but also other Filipinos working abroad.

**Ating Alamin.** Ating Alamin is the longest-running agricultural and livelihood program on television. For the past 38 years, Ating Alamin has been engaged in the promotion of several livelihood projects as well as in the extension of various technologies. This will help seafarers and their spouses to tap additional sources of income for their family.

**Kamao.** Kamao is a boxing show that will keep seafarers entertained and energized even on board.

**Auto Review.** This provides automotive news, car buyers guides and reviews to seafarers who have their own cars or are planning to get one.

**Videoke/Karaoke.** Filipinos are well known music and song lovers. This segment will entertain them and keep them relaxed as they sing timeless songs and popular hits.

**Praise Songs.** Music can be a powerful part of religious ritual, this will help seafarers relax and improve their health as studies claim that listening to this kind of music gives health and spiritual benefits.

**Our Awesome Planet.** A travel show where the Philippines and even other parts of the world are featured. This will enable seafarers to get to know the culture, food and lifestyle of a certain place that they may want to visit with their loved ones.

**Spotlight TV/Racing Line/Inside Motoring.** The growing number of both 2 and 4-wheel vehicles and abundant choices thereof combined with the proliferation of aftermarket accessories and services are true testament to the fact that the average Filipino sees his mode of transportation not just as a necessity, but also as a recreational tool. Most motorists do not limit themselves anymore to the end purchase of a vehicle, but also aspire to be different from the rest. This will help seafarers modify their vehicles, add or replace certain parts to become more "sporty" or race car-like.

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Japanese shipping company Nippon Yusen Kabushiki Kaisha (NYK) has introduced an alert system that will provide tsunami warnings to vessels.

Tsunami warnings issued by the Japan Meteorological Agency and other weather service providers will be sent to vessels via NYK's 'e-missions' system, which provides information about the positions of ships in operation as well as weather and sea conditions for intended routes.

The warnings are intended to allow affected vessels to contact those on shore and make use of the tsunami response guidelines developed and released by NYK in May 2012.

In the event of a tsunami warning, an alert will be sent in English to NYK vessel operators on land who manage the schedules and movement of vessels in service, as well as to the estimated 800 vessels that use the NYK e-missions system. NYK e-missions will update all vessels that could be affected by the possible tsunami and allow vessel operators and NYK’s Marine group to immediately contact the vessels, share information and provide any necessary help.

In addition the warnings released by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Warning Center, the new system will also provide warnings issued for the Japanese coast covering the complete sailing area of all vessels operated by the NYK Group.

NYK’s tsunami response guidelines explain how a vessel in port should react to information about an incoming tsunami, particularly by giving top priority to preserving life and then reducing damage to the vessel hull and port facilities.

(Source: www.nyk.com/english)
Shipowners, unions raise concern at casualty reporting failures

Shipowners and seafarers' unions have joined forces to express concern at flag states’ failure to submit maritime casualty reports as required under international Conventions.

The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), which represents 80% of the world merchant fleet, and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), which represents seafarers' unions worldwide, have made a joint submission to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) commenting on the apparent failure of some flag states to submit maritime casualty reports to IMO. This is a requirement under several international maritime Conventions, including the Safety of Life at Sea Convention (SOLAS).

ICS and ITF hope that governments will give consideration to this important issue at the next meeting of the IMO Maritime Safety Committee in June.

In accordance with SOLAS regulation I/21, maritime administrations undertake to conduct investigations into any casualty occurring to ships under their flag, and to supply IMO with pertinent information concerning the findings of such investigations.

In accordance with other Guidelines adopted by IMO, this is meant to include incidents defined as being a “very serious marine casualty” involving the total loss of the ship, a death, or severe damage to the environment.

“The lack of investigation and accident reports hinders the development of appropriate measures by IMO to address the cause of serious incidents in which seafarers may have lost their lives.” said ITF Acting General Secretary, Stephen Cotton.

“It also frustrates efforts by ship operators to learn from the reports and to amend or develop new procedures, or implement other measures to prevent or mitigate similar future incidents.” said ICS Secretary General, Peter Hinchliffe.

ICS and ITF have therefore suggested that further consideration might be given by IMO to what constitutes "a very serious marine casualty" and the extent to which flag states should retain the latitude which they currently enjoy when determining whether the results of any investigation should be submitted to IMO.

As a first step, they have suggested that, in consultation with ICAO (the International Civil Aviation Organization), IMO might consider whether any lessons might be learnt from the approach taken towards the submission and dissemination of accident reports within the aviation industry.

(Source: www.ics-shipping.org/press_releases)

“The lack of investigation and accident reports hinders the development of appropriate measures by IMO to address the cause of serious incidents in which seafarers may have lost their lives.”
A new home away from home

With its recent building inauguration, AMOSUP has achieved another milestone in providing shelter to seafarers who seek a place to stay while in transit to or upon signing off their ships.

The union’s opening of the Sailor’s Home Annex, a three-storey building in Manila, has secured to benefit nearly 400 embarking and disembarking seafarers, with bed capacity for their temporary place to reside once the need arises. The new Sailor’s Home Annex can accommodate, to be exact, 304 male and 20 female union members.

In availing of the privilege the union gives priority to embarking members who have a flight to catch 24 to 48 hours before their schedule departures for their next ship. Members residing out of Metro Manila need not worry for a place to stay while waiting for the next day’s flight as accommodation at the Sailor’s Home is assured upon disembarkation.

Also, union members who have just disembarked or arriving in Manila after signing off their vessels are given the same priority, especially those bound for the provinces. At the same time, members who undertake training are provided the same concern of accommodation and can enjoy the comfort of the facilities like a new home.

Opened last January, the newly built Sailor’s Home incorporates new and improved features from the other existing facilities to provide every seafarer warm comfort from the harsh realities of life at sea.

Apart from comfortable bunk beds, it has facilities for library, recreation room, mini-gymnasium, dining hall and an open-air pocket garden. Ample luggage storage and individual lockers are also available for both travel and homeward bound seafarers.

To make the facilities more comfortable to union members, it has been designed to incorporate the ‘green building’ technology such as water-cooled air-conditioning, natural air ventilation ducts and heat-insulated roofing and rain-water collection and recycling system. Constructed to further serve more of its seafarers, the union hopes that the new facilities would significantly reduce the waiting list of member applicants who want to check in. Besides the shelter is part of an effort to provide continuous welfare services to members.
The Sailor’s Home Annex has facilities for library, recreation room, mini gym, dining hall and an open-air pocket garden.
For many years, Manila did not have a ‘drop-in centre’ for foreign seafarers that could accommodate them when their ships call at the port. They have taken the risks in going directly to restaurants, bars or other establishments not close to the port with very little knowledge of the area.

But with the recent opening of Manila International Seafarers’ Center (MISC), foreign crewmen can look up to a facility that would cater to their needs as an ideal shore while away from home.

Located at the ground floor in the building of the Port Workers’ Union of the Philippines (PWUP)-Associated Workers’ Union, the centre is just a few steps away from the South Harbor beside Gate 4 or the Roberto S. Oca Gate.

While at the port, seafarers can avail of some basic needs the MISC can provide like computers with internet connection, telephone, recreation facilities, souvenir items, among others. Also, a vehicle is available that can be used in transporting seafarers from and to their ship and in taking them to other areas in Manila like malls, churches, and parks.

A project of the International Committee on Seafarers’ Welfare, renovation of the area dedicated for MISC began in June 2012, with funding from a grant given by the ITF-Seafarers’ Trust. The project, which opened in January this year, has the full support of AMOSUP and PWUP.

ITF president, Paddy Crumlin, noted that Filipino seafarers benefit from seamen’s centres around the world, while “foreign seafarers visiting the Port of Manila have no nearby centre to go to for shore leave. So it is very timely and vital for MISC to open and accept seafarers of the world.”

Crumlin deeply appreciated the help of AMOSUP and AWU/PWUP in making the centre into reality and in giving importance to the welfare of foreign seafarers. The dockers’ union from AWU assists the centre’s ship visitors in gaining access to the port and the ships.

One of the thrusts of the ITF-Seafarers’ Trust is to fund the creation of mariners’ centre around the world that is part of their dedication to the spiritual, moral and physical welfare of seafarers regardless of nationality, race and creed. The Trust aims to provide them a comfortable place to stay for a brief time to spend their shore leave and engaging in activities they normally cannot do while on board and at sea.

MISC also conducts ship visitations in the ports (South Harbor, MICT and North Harbor) to inform foreign seafarers about the services that the centre can provide and invite them to spend a few moments of their time. With the Philippines ratification of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, the establishment of a seafarers centre is timely and answers the need for the country to ensure that shore-based welfare facilities are developed and in place in designated ports. It surely will provide seafarers on ships that are in port with access to adequate welfare facilities and services like the MISC.

The centre had its soft opening in January this year during the ITF Asia/Pacific Dockers’ Conference in the presence of Crumlin; Mahendra Sharma, ITF Asia regional secretary; and Roy Paul of the ITF Seafarers Trust/MPHBP.

Also present during the brief ceremony were Robbie Oca, PWUP-AWU president; Dr Conrad Oca, AMOSUP president; Butch Lamug ICSW-SEA regional chairman; and delegates of the dockers’ conference, and the PWUP-AWU union members.
Members receive Pangkabuhayan fund

AMOSUP’s Pangkabuhayan Program has benefited hundreds of seafarers since the launching of the livelihood program to promote entrepreneurial spirits among union members.

In the recent batch of beneficiaries, 150 members received the starter fund worth PHP50,000 each in short-term capital to finance new and existing small business. The fund can also be used for other purposes like educational expenses, medical and home improvement.

Apart from the fund, the latest Pangkabuhayan raffle draw sent two lucky members home each with an Asian utility vehicle for their ‘pampasadang pangkabuhayan.’

Aside from promoting members’ entrepreneurial skills, the program, which was launched in November 2010 coincide with AMOSUP’s 50th anniversary, helps beyond the usual benefits the union has accorded to seafarers.

In the past, the union had conducted similar programs by awarding motorcycles to members through an annual raffle. Utilising motorcycles as tricycle cabs, this mode of transport is popular nationwide especially in suburban areas and in the metropolis. About 300 members benefited from the annual livelihood program over a period of three years.

Likewise, the union had launched the AMOSUP Calling Card ‘Pangkabuhayan Package’ some two years ago that provided members the chance to earn extra income through sales of reloadable telephone cards while on board. This is a program designed for and available only to AMOSUP members through the union’s telecom service provider, Access International.

In the latest Pangkabuhayan project, which was conceptualised with the Eastwest Bank, the Board decided to provide financial assistance to members through the program.

In 2011, the Board decided to give only half of the total number of awards to give the majority of the members a chance to qualify for the program, considering their nature of employment.

Lucky beneficiaries of Pangkabuhayan are drawn while the union reserves to extend the program as it deems necessary. All AMOSUP bona fide members are eligible to join the program. Interested members are required to come in person to the Seamen’s Centre and accomplish the required forms, update their personal records and files and fully agree to the terms and conditions of the program.

Requirements to be presented for the issuance of the Pangkabuhayan certificate are as follows:

If filed by member/seafarer:
- AMOSUP ID plus two valid IDs (e.g., SSS ID, TIN Card, Driver’s licence, etc)
- AMOSUP Pangkabuhayan claim stub

If filed by member/seafarer’s dependent:
- AMOSUP dependent’s ID plus two valid IDs
- Photocopy of member/seafarer’s AMOSUP ID and any valid ID
- Marriage contract
- Latest allotment slip
- Special Power of Attorney
- AMOSUP Pangkabuhayan Program claim stub
Non-crewing work clause

“The AMOSUP is an affiliate of the International Transport Workers Federation – the latter being an international umbrella organisation of transport related unions worldwide – one of which is the maritime labour industry – stakeholders of which are the shipowners/shipowners associations, seafarers, unions and their social partners.

AMOSUP, as an ITF affiliated union, enters into collective bargaining agreements (CBA) with shipowners in accordance with ITF established policies.

ITF Standard Agreements basically embody uniform standards of rates of pay worldwide, by region and type of flag, flag of convenience/second registers and national flags, disability and death compensation benefits, leave pay and other economic concerns.

There are, however, also provisions that are non-economic provisions, which are vital and significant to the ITF and its affiliates.

One such provision of the CBA in Article 7.6.1, the ‘Non-seafarer Work’ reads: “Neither ships’ crew nor anyone else on board whether in permanent or temporary employment by the company shall be required or induced to carry out cargo handling and other work traditionally or historically done by dock workers without the prior agreement of the ITF dockers’ union concerned and provided that the individual seafarers shall be adequately compensated in carrying out such duties.

For the purpose of this clause ‘cargo handling’ may include but is not limited to: loading, unloading, stowing, unstowing, pouring, trimming, classifying, sizing, stacking, unstacking as well as composing and decomposing unit loads; and also services in relation with cargo or goods, such as tallying, weighing, measuring, cubing, checking, receiving, guarding, delivering, sampling and sealing, lashing and unlashing.”

Its significance has lately been the subject of dispute and the Union. Other protagonists were compelled, under the provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, to bring the issues of contention - the interpretation and enforcement of the said provision - to the ambit of the grievance machinery and voluntary arbitration.

What is being protected by the CBA is that seafarers have their particular jobs on board and there are tasks which specifically pertain to dockworkers. No encroachment on the type of work by one or the other should occur despite the close relationship of the nature of the employment.

The legal proceedings have now been brought to the appellate court as a matter of judicial structural system.
FAQs on members’ hospital benefits

Your good health, as well as the well-being of your family, is important to us. We understand that to be able to work well, you and your family have to be healthy.

This is the reason why AMOSUP created the Family Medical and Dental Care Plan. Through the Seamen’s Hospital in Manila, a level four hospital with teaching and training facilities, and tertiary hospitals in Cebu, Iloilo and Davao, AMOSUP brings hospitalisation, treatment and medicines free of charge to qualified members and their dependents.

AMOSUP is continuously looking for ways to improve the capabilities of Seamen’s Hospital to address more of your health concerns. For the Hospital’s future expansion, the Union is carefully studying locations where it can offer specific services that will be of greater benefit to more of its members.

Q: Am I qualified?
A: If you are an active bona fide member of AMOSUP, you and your legal dependents are qualified to avail of the services of the Seamen’s Hospital.

Q: Who are my qualified dependents?
A: If you are married:
- Your legitimate wife
- Your legitimate unmarried children below 18 years old
If you are single with no children:
- Your natural parents
- Your unmarried brothers and sisters below 18 years old
If you are single with children:
Your legitimate unmarried children below 18 years old

Q: How long can I avail of these benefits?
A: All qualified members and other dependents can avail of benefits at the Seamen’s Hospital from the date of embarkation of the member up to six months after disembarkation.

Q: What are the requirements?
A: For members:
- AMOSUP ID card
- Seaman’s Book
In the absence of the Seaman’s Book, please present the following:
- Photocopy of the Seaman’s Book with the name of the last vessel you boarded and date of disembarkation
- Updated verification slip from the AMOSUP Records Section
- Latest allotment/pay slip
- Certificate of employment from the manning agency

Q: How can I get a Dependent’s ID?
A: Go to the Medical Records Section at the ground floor of Seamen’s Hospital from Monday to Friday 1pm-3pm
- Get an application form and fill it out
- Submit the form together with the following:
  - Latest allotment/pay slip or AMOSUP verification slip
  - Group or individual pictures of unmarried children below 18 years old
  - Duly registered married contract with registry number
  - Duly registered birth certificates of unmarried children below 18 years old

For dependents of single AMOSUP member:
- Parent(s)
  - Group or individual pictures of unmarried brother/sister below 18 years old
  - Latest allotment/pay slip, AMOSUP verification slip or contract
  - Duly registered birth certificate of the member and his unmarried brothers and sisters who are below 18 years old
  - Affidavit of support if the parent is 60 years old and above
  - Have your picture taken at the MR Section
  - Pay P20 to the cashier
  - Show the receipt and claim your ID on the same day

Q: What are the benefits:
A: As a qualified member, you and your legal dependents can avail of consultations, be provided with medicines, treatment, hospitalisation and examination free of charge subject to availability of the services and supplies

For medico-legal cases:
Seamen’s Hospital does not handle medico-legal cases for members and their dependents. However, it is prepared to give first aid treatment before the patient is transferred to a government hospital with a medico-legal officer or offers the procedure.

Q: What is the procedure?
A: Make sure you bring all the requirements.
- Non-emergency patients should proceed to the Record Section located at the ground floor of the hospital and present the requirements for registration.
- You will be given instruction after verification of your documents
- In cases of emergency, please proceed directly to the Emergency Room.
At the inauguration of Sailor’s Home Annex. (From left) AMOSUP president Dr. Conrad F. Oca, ITF regional secretary of the Asia-Pacific region Menendra Sharma, ITF assistant general secretary Stuart Howard, POEA administrator Hans Saldanha, and IF president Padraig Crumlin.

Dr. and Mrs. Conrado F. Oca, and Mercedes Oca

Marissa Oca and Mayenny Oca

Unveiling ceremony of Dormitory for MAAP trainees. V Admiral Eduardo Ma, R. Santos and Dr. Corrado Oca

Groundbreaking ceremony of AMOSUP community development project in Dasmariñas, Cavite. (From right) Butch Lamia, Conrado Oca, Marissa Oca, Mercedes Oca.