SEAFARERS TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEM

PH BIDS FOR ANOTHER CHANCE TO COMPLY
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BSMARE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING
BSMTE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND ENGINEERING

CENTER FOR ADVANCE MARITIME STUDIES

COURSES OFFERED:

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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MARINE ENGINEERING (TECHNICAL SUPERINTENDENT)
TESTING ASSESSMENT CENTER OF TESDA

MAAP Profile

Geographic destiny has given the Filipino the innate talent to be an excellent seafarer. To enhance this natural skill, the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) was established on January 14, 1998. The Academy stands on a 103-hectare property in Kamaya Point, Mariveles, Bataan.

The Associated Marine Officer’s and Seamen’s Union of the Philippines (AMOSUP) founded by the late Capt. Gregorio S Oca, capitalized and developed the Academy. The new AMOSUP President, Dr. Conrado F. Oca, heads the Academy’s board of governors. The board is comprised of representatives from the private sector, the International Transport Workers Federation, the Filipino Association of Maritime Employers, the International Mariners Management Association of Japan, the Norwegian Seafarer’s Union, the International Maritime Employers’ Committee, the Danish Shipowners’ Association, the Norwegian Shipowners’ Association, and the Japan Shipowners’ Association.

MAAP conducts shipboard training aboard T/S Kapitan Felix Oca, a 5020 DWT dedicated training ship capable of accommodating 180 midshipmen and 9 instructors in 30 air-conditioned cabins and six berths.
Welcome. The Philippines seafarers training and certification system has faced a new round of compliance after that European Maritime Safety Agency inspection and evaluation in April 2017.

As the maritime administration finalised its proposed corrective actions needed to be undertaken, we are optimistic the sector will smoothly sail in complying with the requirements of the STCW Convention. Through the cooperation of the various stakeholders involved to patch up loopholes in the system, which we think is the key to this effort, the industry seems to have addressed the requirements of the European Commission (EC). Upon receipt of the assessment report – from informing the stakeholders to the drafting of the final report submitted to EC last 27 April 2018 – the industry knew how high the stakes are if we fail to hurdle them again this time.

We’re bringing you the overall perspective of the challenges the youth faces in union-building through a workshop the ITF conducted for its young transport sector. You’ll find that the workshop, attended by the youth participants from AMOSUP and PSU, delivered the potentials of a young and dynamic group in the strategy of strengthening the sector’s level of organising and eventually in decision-making process.

We also delve on the resumption of the mariners’ bridging programme, in which the government infused fresh funds as a way to upgrade skills into seafaring. Those of you who are interested to continue as a ship officer may find it interesting to know the criteria for applicants for the scholarship grants OWWA offers.

At the same time, we also highlight the recent commencement exercises of the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific, which graduated the first batch of its 2018 Class a total of 169 senior cadets. In this event our guest-of-honour delivered significant message that the graduating cadets must follow as their guide to their journey for a financially rewarding career.

We feature the experience shared by our beauty titlist who has taken up the advocacy for seafarers’ welfare on her journey to the Bb. Pilipinas pageant. Her decision to push her advocacy for the welfare of Filipino seafarers would make many in the profession proud.

Relatively, our series of interviews with AMOSUP members continues to inspire those in the seafaring profession. This fifth installment resumes with the stories of how our seafarers loved their jobs amidst the hazards and sacrifices of working away from families and friends.

Happy Sailing Forward!

Dr Conrado F. Oca

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Counting on PH youth power

The youth group of the two Philippine affiliates of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) – AMOSUP and Philippine Seafarers Union (PSU) – has joined in a workshop the ITF carried out for its young transport workers engagement in trade unions.

With the aim to contribute to the overall strategy of the ITF to “strengthen young workers’ level of union-organising and eventually participating in the decision-making process”, the two-and-half-day workshop delivered the potentials of a young and dynamic group the ITF can tap for such a goal. The workshop was carried out at the AMOSUP Seamen’s Centre last 9-11 May 2018.

Artika Ashdhir, the ITF lead person - union-building and youth work (Asia Pacific), who conducted the seminar, sits with Sailing Forward in a Q and A segment for an overall perspective of the challenges the youth faces in union-building and an assessment of the workshop on the side.

Sailing Forward: When and how did you start to working for the ITF Youth?

Artika Ashdhir: I started with the ITF Youth in March (2018). But I’ve been working with the ITF since July 2016, organising for the DHL campaign. My job with the union was to make sure that they come together to fulfil the campaign goals. After that, we had shifted focus a little bit and started looking for places to organise. We started looking at DHL warehouses which employ more than 1,500 workers in one place. Also, I did my Master in Globalisation and Labour from the Global Labour University in Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, India. After that, I was placed in another global union – the IUF (International Union of Food Workers). I was working in IUF in the Philippines in 2014 and got in touch with the ITF that was then looking for an organiser.

SF: What work do you usually perform in the ITF Youth Team?

AA: I joined the youth team in March as the ITF wants to activate the youth members and affiliates in India, Nepal, Indonesia and the Philippines. We have a project with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) to reach out to as many young workers as possible and understand what their challenges are. Also, we are focusing on providing them with organising tools so that they can go out and organise more young people. We are also focusing on how to develop their leadership skills so that they’ll become a part of the union in the decision-making process.

SF: How is the youth section in the region progressing in terms of participation in union activities?

AA: The youth section has become more defined over the years in the ITF. So we have a global youth coordinator based in Amman, Jordan. She looks over youth activities all over the world. Someone sits in the London office...
who helps the implementation of the programme and projects for the youth. I look over the youth coordination in Asia Pacific and in Latin America. The ITF understands the real power lies in the global south. That’s why we are focusing in Asia Pacific and Latin America as well as Africa.

**SF: What are the challenges faced by the youth in trade unionism?**

**AA:** The biggest challenge is the nature of work. Work is becoming more and more precarious. Even though we are progressing in terms of technology and automation as jobs are becoming more digitalised and advanced, at the same time the nature of job is becoming bad. There are more casual, it’s easier to hire and fire people. And the youth appears to carry the brunt in the workplace. In the union itself, the main issue young members’ face is that they don’t get the space to bring on their agenda. Also the organising techniques, right now we need fresh ideas on how we do organise more and make the union strong. Till now we are focusing on traditional techniques and this has to change a bit. And for that we need the support and motivation of the union leadership. Because the young union members ought not to replace them. They are to empower them or support their quest to make the union stronger.

**SF: How important is it to develop the youth section in the ITF?**

**AA:** ITF has been focusing a lot on working with young transport workers. It is extremely important for us because the future of the industry – the young workers – are going to face the brunt both in the dockers and seafarers sides. Even if you look at the other sectors of the transport industry they face the same problem. These include the changing policies that are becoming anti-labour day by day. So we need to start organising the youth now.

**SF:** What do you think can the Philippine youth contribute to the overall ITF strategy in strengthening young workers?

**AA:** There’s a lot of potential for ITF in working with the young workers especially for seafarers in the Philippines. To be honest, ITF’s strategies are quite aligned with its affiliates. Because its strategies come from their affiliates. That’s why we asked their action plan in this workshop. We are here to support you with Philippine plans: to advice, consult and guide you. There’s a lot of potential in organising young seafarers, including issues and challenges. But I believe AMOSUP and PSU are both enthusiastic in the youth committee to make sure of a lot of engagement with the young seafarers. This can help them to be more aware of their unions to help them.

An example is the Youth Helpline which is a good initiative. It can help the youth on ships when you want
to make a complaint. You can call the Youth Helpline to report on. For example, when the captain talked to me in a very bad tone and I don’t know what to do and I feel really depressed. How do I go ahead? So you know somebody on the other line can advise or support me.

**SF:** How do you assess this Philippine youth workshop?

**AA:** This is a young and dynamic group. They have a lot of ideas and they are eager to work on union stuff. And that’s what we count on. It has the energy and creativity which the ITF wants to tap for bigger potential.

**SF:** Compared with the youth in other parts of Aspac, how’s the Philippine youth doing?

**AA:** It’s very interactive. We have made the agenda in such a way that we get the people whom you’re talking to and we get the challenges and solutions themselves. Though it is very easy to talk about problems, but how can we sit down together and think of solutions? That is the interesting part here. Because they are in touch with cadets and seafarers on a daily basis, they understand the issues. But it is very important to instill that thing to manage and solve the issues.

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**SF:** What are the strengths of the Philippine youth participants in the recent workshop?

**AA:** They are young and creative and have a lot of energy. They’ve got some very good ideas and already doing great work. But this work needs to come with one platform and get aligned with each other. I think that would make a bigger piece of work. They only need to come together and combine what they are doing and combine the effort so that it becomes more of a national thing. The things that came out today was that AMOSUP and PSU will form a Young Philippines Seafarers their first Facebook page. Young seafarers can join the group so that they can look at what is happening in the sector, the ITF, and as a good way to engage people.

**SF:** Which part of the workshop you like the most?

**AA:** The one-on-one communication was really interesting. We did a little bit of role playing. We gave two people a role: A young union representative and the other a young seafarer at the Sailor’s Home (the hostel for AMOSUP members). The youth rep approaches the young sailor to come to a youth meeting in the next two days. The challenge is how to approach, build rapport and trust to convince the youth that they come to the activity. It’s a basic organising activity that affiliates use on a daily basis. It was interesting because we heard a lot of interesting conversations and they acted their role really well. [SF]
The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and its affiliated unions work together to fight for the rights of all seafarers around the world.

To support seafarers the ITF has a global network of more than 130 inspectors and contacts in 57 countries, who can be called upon to deal with any problems seafarers face. For those areas of the world where no inspector is available, the ITF Seafarers Support team based in the ITF Head Office in London can be contacted.

The Contact details are:

Email  seafsupport@itf.org.uk
SMS    +44 7984 356 573
WhatsApp/Viber +44 7523 515 097
Facebook www.facebook.com/itfseafarerssupport

Please remember that when contacting the ITF Seafarers Support team or the ITF inspectors, you should provide the Name and Flag of the vessel, the IMO number, your current location and full details of the problem or problems you have.

In addition to these contact details the ITF has developed a FREE iOS and Android app called ITF Seafarers. Using this app you can look up vessel details taken directly from the ITF system, find and contact an ITF Inspector or ITF Maritime affiliated union plus much, much more.
Candlelight for HIV AIDS victims

Hundreds of Filipino seafarers have joined to remember those who died of the condition's related illnesses and to serve as the sector's mobilisation campaign to raise social consciousness about HIV AIDS

Jane, 43, has been married to a merchant ship officer, with two children. She’s working in a private firm in Manila and is performing in her job well.

One day she had a strange feeling – her body became so weak. She could hardly perform her usual daily tasks, so she had to pay a visit to the company's doctor. She took some vitamins and medicine the doctor prescribed to relieve her condition.

However, Jane complained that her condition had not improved. “I still felt very weak as days went by,” she said. Until then she decided to have a complete medical check-up and received the shocking result of her condition: She had been tested positive for HIV.

Apart from remembering the victims of AIDS-related illnesses, Gamido said, “The ceremony celebrated the initiatives we’ve done to stop its spread and support the medical needs of those with the existing HIV condition, especially those in the seafaring sector.”

To remember those who died of HIV/AIDS-related illnesses, hundreds of Filipino seafarers have joined the Candlelight Memorial at the AMOSUP Seamen's Centre last 25 May 2018. The activity also aimed to serve as a community mobilisation campaign to raise social consciousness about HIV AIDS.

Aptly themed “Reflecting on our past, Preparing for our future”, the candlelight memorial served as an important intervention for global solidarity, breaking down barriers of stigma and discrimination and giving hope to new generations.

The beginning

The event traced its beginning in 1983 during a time of confusion and misconception about a mysterious disease sweeping the gay community in San Francisco in the United States. Knowing they
would die within the year and with no political support, according to the website of the International AIDS Candlelight Memorial, four young men decided to put a “face on the disease” by coordinating a small vigil behind a banner reading “Fighting For Our Lives.”

It said the original coordinators planned a march down the Castro District to City Hall and created a poster. “As others joined in, the Candlelight drew thousands, beginning a movement that would inspire countless other people living with HIV and AIDS in other countries to bring HIV into the light for communities and national leaders, to foster support, and move people to action.”

Since that day, the Candlelight Memorial has brought together people in many parts of the world to honour those lost to AIDS, support people living with HIV and AIDS and demonstrate the importance of civil society, which plays a central role in HIV treatment, prevention, care and support. It has been organised annually on the third Sunday of May. Over time, tens of thousands of memorial events have been held involving millions of people.

**Importance of participation**

At the AMOSUP’s candlelight memorial, Gamido reminded participating seafarers of the activity to take good care of their health, cautioning them of the consequences once a mariner tests positive for HIV. “Imagine the hardships that you had gone through to finish paying for your home, car and financial support for the family once declared with the condition.”

He said HIV has bearings on the family’s social and economic aspects. “Once a seafarer acquires the disease it will have an impact on his entire family.” It means, he said, not only leading the wife to work double time to catch up as the family’s breadwinner, but also the fear of giving her the same condition had the husband not been tested immediately.

Gamido cited the importance of the seafarers’ participation as they learn the value of protecting themselves outside of marital sex. He also warned to have their teenagers in the family guided about sex in relation to HIV once they sail away for work. “Those with HIV AIDS are getting younger – from 15-24 years – who have been diagnosed with the condition. We don’t want this to happen to our children.”

The PMPI president also carped on principals or ship owners who still have to accept HIV positive seafarers to work on their ships. He has insisted that based on WHO’s (World Health Organisation) recommendation, if an HIV-positive person can undergo treatment, he can perform his duties and responsibilities on board.

But ship owners, he says, “still have to recognise such a reality. We have to do more efforts to align their thoughts in doing away with such discrimination in employment.” PMPI counted 34 HIV-positive seafarers who have gone back to work on board, a year since the NGO was set up early last year.

It has also counted about 500 HIV-positive seafarers who have called them about their concerns. “You can’t imagine the burden they carry on their shoulders such as how to face their condition and their future. Others don’t even know how to tell it to their family.” For those who are not tested positive, Gamido said: “We have to give importance to this knowledge being shared by AMOSUP and PMPI concerning HIV awareness. And to those positively tested, you have to accept it and learn to play with your cards you’ve dealt with. All of us have to face our own problems.”
Accord for quality wellness training

Postibong Marino Philippines and Homer Foundation will also tackle education on HIV/AIDS prevention and mental health concerns, which working and upcoming seafarers now face.

Two NGOs have signed a memo of understanding to jointly administer a programme that will carry out and deliver quality wellness training and workshop for seafarers.

Postibong Marino Philippines Inc (PMPI) and Homer Foundation Inc (HFI) said that their “common vision of improving the quality of seafarers’ lives through dissemination of information, training and general education” prodded the non-government organisations to pursue such an initiative.

Under the agreement signed last 07 March 2018, PMPI will provide competent and qualified trainers and instructors who will deliver health wellness and orientation for HFI, which has the backing of a leading crew and ship management firm, for its pre-departure orientation seminar (PDOS).

The PDOS on Occupational Health and the Safety Module 4 will also include education on HIV/AIDS prevention and mental health concerns, which working and upcoming seafarers face as part of their health and wellness issues. HFI, through the auspices of Magsaysay Maritime Corporation, will provide the facilities such as classrooms, offices, equipment and supplies essential to the delivery of the PDOS.

HFI, which is responsible for the management of the facilities, will also provide for the administrative and financial support necessary for the operation. It will take charge of the promotion and enrollment of participants.

HIV prevention goal

“We want to achieve the same goal of HIV prevention among seafarers. We’re glad that we’ve partnered with PMPI that has regularly done seminars for the Magsaysay group,” said Marlon Rono, president of Magsaysay Maritime Corp.

He said Magsaysay group has been concerned about the alarming cases of HIV among seafarers and wanted to push the HIV education project, which was started by ITF-AMOSUP which was started by ITF-AMOSUP along with the Joint Manning Group (JMG) in the Philippines. Through JMG, which is the country’s umbrella group of the manning industry, Rono said a lot of efforts have been done in the area of HIV prevention in encouraging member manning organisations on this issue.

In addition, he said an educational video on HIV/AIDS prevention programme has been produced and distributed to the manning agencies for their PDOS. In collaboration with the ITF-AMOSUP, this video has been translated in several languages so it can be used by seafarers in other countries.

ITF’s Dr. Asif Altat, who witnessed the MOU signing, said the London-based union has been closely working with Magsaysay-HFI in educating seafarers on HIV prevention as part of the crews’ wellness programme.

Dr Asif suggested that Magsaysay, which employs many seafarers from the Visayas, could also carry out talks for their vacationing crew on the HIV/AIDS
subject, along with AMOSUP at the union’s hospitals in Cebu and Iloilo. The same endeavour has been regularly scheduled by PMPI each month at the union’s Seafarer’s House in Intramuros, Manila.

Removing the stigma

PMPI president Jbensen Redem Gamido said 23 seafarers with HIV condition have returned and were accommodated to work on ships since the ITF-AMOSUP-JMG launched the HIV education project in the maritime sector. Some of the companies that have admitted the crew include RCCL, Magsaysay, OSM and Maersk Line.

“The owners have opened their doors to accept seafarers with HIV condition but who are healthy enough and fit to work based on diagnoses by their respective medical clinics,” Gamido said.

Although it’s a long process to steer clear of the stigma for those who have the condition, he stressed that negotiations with the principals or ship owners to hire them will be of great help. For instance, Gamido has sent letters to employers requesting them to be receptive in accommodating “HIV seafarers.”

“It is the stigma that we wanted to remove in the hiring process among seafarers with the HIV condition,” he added. PMPI has counted a total of 324 seafarers with HIV, whom it has contacted over the past 12 months ending March 2018. SF

BOOK SUBJECT PRIVILEGE.

Retiring merchant ship Second Officer Michaelangelo Alvarez (pictured right) has visited AMOSUP after knowing that his picture while at work appeared in one of the photos taken by Swedish author and photojournalist Stefan F Lindberg, whose works AMOSUP exhibited at its Seamen’s Centre and service units.

Alvarez’ photo (pictured below) was captured while the Second Mate was manning the winches of the Swedish-flagged ro-ro ship Transwood sometime in 2011. The photo also prominently appeared in Lindberg’s photography book ‘Seafarers’. And for that, Alvarez expressed “my gratitude to Lindberg for his excellent coverage about seafarers in the world and as a privilege to be one of them as part of your book. The positive exposure gave the Filipinos a proof how we worked with quality in competitive industry that makes us proud to be called world class professionals.” SF
PH treads on new round of compliance in training and certification system

The European Commission’s assessment report has identified a range of areas pertaining to the implementation of the STCW requirements that need attention or further improvement. Sailing Forward’s Andy Dalisay takes a look at how the maritime administration progresses in addressing the needed corrective measures.

The Philippines maritime education and training system has long been under the spotlight of the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) through its series of inspection and evaluation. Yet the need for reform continues to hound state agencies involved in the enforcement of these policies for the required system improvement.

Now stakeholders have to cooperate to address EMSA’s latest report on whether or not one of the world’s largest sources of seafarers complies with the Standards of Training, Certification and Watch-keeping Convention (STCW) as amended. The European Commission (EC) has received this latest EMSA report, along with the “voluntary corrective action plan” the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) had submitted, following an inspection and assessment in March 2017.

EMSA’s sequence of inspection and evaluation on the country’s education and training system began in 2006 pursuant to regulation I/10 of the IMO STCW 1978 Convention as amended.

EC, which evaluated EMSA’s submissions, transmitted its assessment to MARINA last 24 January 2018. EC’s assessment report identified a range of areas pertaining to the implementation of the STCW requirements that need attention or further improvement.

These areas include “national provisions (circulars and memoranda) and the activities of the national administration (MARINA) as well as the education and training institutions that were visited in March 2017.

A year after that EMSA visit, MARINA has come out with the proposed corrective actions that have to be undertaken. It submitted the pertinent documents containing measures that have been put in place or intended to be improved. The EU delegation office in Makati received the documents last 27 April 2018, three days before the 30 April submission deadline set by the EC.

Actions undertaken

MARINA has undertaken several initiatives and actions to address the EC requirements. After dissemination of the EC report to the stakeholders concerned, the Task Group it created went along to work and coordinated with an STCW Advisory Council, which is composed of private sector representatives in the maritime industry. This council has its specific functions in the implementation of the STCW Convention.

Another initiative was the creation of a review committee led by the Advisory Council to conduct a comprehensive review of the questionnaires for the theoretical examination. “The theoretical examination is part of the assessment procedure. It’s not a licensure exam,” the OIC of the Office of Executive Director, Arty Vera Joy Ban-eg, told an “Usapang STCW” forum.
Ms Ban-eg pointed out that there's a need for the alignment to conduct the existing approved MARINA examination and assessment procedures. The move intends to establish a concrete basis for the enhancement or replacement of the current examination and assessment system that will take place this year.

This is not only in response to EMSA, she said. Whether there is an EMSA inspection or IMO audit, she stressed that the agency had to do something. “This is something for us to unite and do something for our seafarers. The assessment procedure is the key. It’s one of the critical areas that we have to look into.”

Education and assessment are two of the main issues that EMSA wants the Philippines to focus on. Ms Ban-eg stressed that EMSA still has to issue an assessment report on the Philippines.

Accredited maritime institutions must submit their revised curriculum beginning school year 2018-19 in compliance with CHED memorandum order number 67, which is the revised policies, standards and guidelines for the BS in Marine Transportation and BS Marine Engineering. MARINA and CHED will have to monitor the institutions well.

MARINA also has jointly coordinated with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in monitoring the cadets' shipboard training on board domestic ships. Once MARINA provides the monitoring tool and mechanism as to how cadets shipboard training will be carried out, PCG can start the checking/monitoring and submit them to MARINA.

At the same time, the maritime administration has strengthened its collaboration with the state-run National Maritime Polytechnic (NMP) on seafarers training, with the signing of an agreement last May to carry out short term courses at NMP's Tacloban facilities.

STCW 101: An advocacy to ensure awareness of stakeholders compliance

The Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA) has counted more than 40 mandatory training courses at all levels that it enforces in compliance with the standards of training and certification of seafarers.

But seafarers don’t seem to appreciate or understand the importance of these credentials they possess pertaining to the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention, according to MARINA officials.

Atty Vera Joy Ban-eg, the MARINA OIC at the Office of Executive Director, said she noticed in their interviews with seafarers that “only a few understand and appreciate why seafarers have to undergo training.”

That’s why she tries to understand them when she used to read seafarers comments on social media, whether these are negative or positive. But as seafarers blurt out their frustrations in social media, Ms Ban-eg says, this comes as an “indicator that we have a problem in the system.”

In one of her presentations during the “Usapang STCW forum,” Ms Ban-eg delivered her far-reaching criticism on the seafaring profession that led MARINA to come up with a solution to the problem: STCW 101. “That we also have a problem on the appreciation of seafarers in their profession and on the certification system brings us down to STCW 101,” she said.

The maritime administration has pinpointed that there's a gap in that appreciation and understanding. Ms Ban-eg explained: “When a ship officer is not able to explain the certificate that he is holding, that is
MARINA officials conceded that it covered all issues in the proposed corrective actions that the EC had pinpointed in complying with the requirements of training and certification system of seafarers. It’s been a collaborative efforts by the state shipping body and stakeholders that included education and training institutions and manning agencies in addressing the issues facing the country’s seafarers training and certification system.

**Online appointment system**

The maritime administration’s next course of action is to work on the enforcement of those corrective measures being undertaken or proposed to undertake. By 31 October 2018, MARINA will have to address the EC for “evidence of implementation” of such measures. And by October 2019, it will have to submit “evidence that the supporting information technology systems (IT) have been developed.”

When it comes to IT, the shipping body launched the STCW-SiRB (Seafarer’s Identification Record Book) online appointment system and mobile app at the PICC last 25 May. This online appointment system gives thousands of applicants a huge sigh of relief in doing away with physically appearing before MARINA for the processing of their documents.

Features of the online application system includes paperless processing, online evaluation and review of documents. It has a mobile app for verification, application, and multiple payment options.

The system has been pilot-tested to monitor and correct possible glitches, and will proceed for its availability to the public.

already a gap. As the administration that issues the certificate and facilitates the accreditation and monitoring of MTI (Maritime Training Institutions) and MHEI (Maritime Higher Education Institutions), we (MARINA) have to do something.”

Thus, one of the things that they can do and implement immediately with no cost at all is the free mandatory STCW 101 sessions. She explained that it is a “way of appreciating, mandating our seafarers that ‘Hey this is how important the certificate you are holding is and the administration issues that to you; it’s a way of guaranteeing to the international community that you are a competent holder, that you can function, deliver the tasks’.

And the moment we release the certificate the burden is on the administration.”

She said that by going back to the basic, at least before they go on board, the seafarers will be able to appreciate that the certificate they possess is not just a requirement of the manning agency and MARINA. “It means this is my life, the requirement of my bread and butter. It represents my whole being as a seafarer,” she added.

Starting last April, ten manning agencies have already started conducting the 101 orientation—MARINA experts carry it out upon request. In MARINA alone, it has piloted the fundamentals before they release the seafarers’ certificates where mariners have to undergo an hour of orientation for their appreciation.

Ms Ban-eg stressed the reason why they included the manning agencies because the agents sign the completion of the requirements. Besides, Regulation 1/14 of the Convention emphasises the responsibilities of shipping and manning companies.”

It gives us an advocacy to ensure awareness among stakeholders regarding the importance of complying with the requirements of the international convention, a spokesperson in the shipping body added.
Maritime profession drives career, family better

Amidst the hazards and sacrifices of working away from families and friends, many seafarers have succeeded in their careers including the realisation of dreams for their next of kin. Sailing Forward’s Andy Dalisay talks to AMOSUP members in a series of interviews as they share segments of their stories.
Danny Jamero, Chief Engineer: The taming of the crew

Working overseas was far more difficult. Sometimes you would get stuck in mid-sea once an engine trouble erupts, with 36 hours manually, continuously working without rest as we’d not been computerised yet.

The apprentice engineer spent two years in the same domestic ship. Some of the usual jobs he did were helping to roll away barrels of lube oil from the depot to the ro-ro ship for delivery, cleaning the ship engine and joining the ship engineers to overhaul the machineries.

Danny relates that he came from a poor family and wanted to gain an experience to help two brothers and a sister go to college. His two brothers followed suit when they also took up marine courses. Like Danny, they are now maritime professionals – one is a Second Officer and the other an Oiler.

He studied a maritime course because, Danny says, it was the most affordable course at the time. It wasn’t as costly as now. And it’s the course my parents could afford to pay for our college education. And after completing the course, a maritime graduate only needed a seaman’s book, passport and SOLAS certificate to be able to work on a ship in the early 1990s he says.

It’ll be the biggest challenge he has to face as a professional seafarer. That’s how Danny Jamero foresees his upcoming role as a Chief Engineer (CE) when he assumes the top rank for the first time in the ship’s engine department.

Danny has hurdled the exam for his CE ticket just last March as he looked forward to perform the role once completing the requirements for his CoC (Certificate of Competency). He either expects a promotion from his current company upon joining his next ship or scout for a new one. The erstwhile 2nd Engineer came home last March and seated for the marine professional exam after signing off from his ship, the 82,562 DWT bulk carrier London 2012 of Tsakos Shipping & Trading.

Danny has so far finished seven contracts with the Greek shipowner over the last eight years. He says a mixed feeling of excitement and nervousness gripped him when he learned the good news. Excited, now that he has reached the zenith of his career, but nervously hounded as he knows the pressure when one leads the prospect of facing an entire department under his full accountability.

"Kung noon walang gaanong pressure, ngayon hindi lang pressure. Hindi na puedeng magtago sa mga responsibilidad lalo na halinbawa kung may problema sa makina ang barko," Danny says. (Previously, there had not been much pressure at work, but now it’s not only pressure. Can no longer skip from the responsibility once a problem, for instance, occurs in the ship’s engine.)

A graduate of BS in Marine Engineering at St. Joseph Institute of Technology in Butuan City in 1990, Danny started to work as an apprentice engineer on board the interisland passenger-cargo ship Sweet Pearl of the defunct Sweet Lines in 1992. "I was very happy when I had my first chance to get on board at the time. I knew it would be the start of a career for me," he says.
When he finished his apprenticeship, Danny applied to an overseas shipping company. He became an oiler on the crude oil tanker Andres Bonifacio, the 260,200 DWT VLCC formerly owned by Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC). Comparing his previous work from the domestic trade, he cites the difference between his experiences when he joined an oceangoing ship.

"Mas mahirap di hamak sa overseas. Minsan tinitik kayo sa gitna ng dagat kung magkaproblema sa makina, 36 oras na trabaho walang tulungan kasi mano- mano at hindi pa computerised noon," he recalls. (Working overseas was far more difficult. Sometimes you would get stuck in mid-sea once an engine trouble erupts, with 36 hours manually, continuously working without rest as we’d not been computerised yet.)

Although he easily adapted to the difficult life on board an overseas vessel, Danny says he would rather share some problem with co-workers to lighten up his mood. He also reads the bible, which became his constant companion during difficult times on board.

One of the hard situations he ran into was when he had a Japanese superior who had complex issues with subordinates. He says: "Unang tingin pa lang nya pagsuma ko ng barko, mainit na ang dugo nya sa akin. Kaya laging pasigaw kung mag utos at megbigay ng gagawin: 'Danny-san take charge of this! Danny-san do this... do that!.' (At first glance as I’ve just embarked on the ship, he seemed to have a grudge on me. He would always yell whenever he gives a command and task.)

To fend off his ill-tempered superior, Danny devised his own strategy at work. He would go closer instead wherever the Japanese boss went to work. "Lalong nainis, pero hindi ko pinapansin. Katuwiran ko ba ‘hindi ko naman naintindihan ang sinasabi mo, Hapon, eh,'" he says. (He got more irritated, but I just didn’t give a damn. Besides, I don’t understand what you were saying’, in Japanese, eh).

His scheme to tame his superior, who had reportedly sent home a number of engine officers for undue reasons such as "disliking them, unexpectedly worked out. One day, Danny continues, "our purifier encountered a problem. Only the two of us were around as other crewmembers went on a break. He was forced to approach me [for help] concerning the problem."

And the Filipino engine officer had worked to fix the failed purifier. Since then, Danny and his Japanese boss became acquainted with each other. Without a qualm, the latter would even join him on their working hours, Danny says. "Even if our tasks have ended, he would request me to be with him. At pagdating sa puerto, papababain nya ako kahit naka-duty upang samahan lang syang lumabas," (Once we docked, he would ask me to disembark even if I’m still working just to join him to go out).

They’d finally gotten each other’s chemistry, to say the least. But how he “tamed a crew” or rather an officer in this case was beyond Danny’s expectation. Prior to that, however, he says his life had become miserable, which he endured for three months.

He has worked for over two and a half decades on more than 20 different types of merchant ships with mixed nationality crew. Seafaring has done a great contribution to Danny’s life and family. "I became known in our community because of this profession. Our family’s quality of life got uplifted because of seafaring. I was able to send my sibling to college and led them to success in their respective fields.”

He has been building a three-door flat as part of a business venture and has invested in a farmland and residential estates. The 46-year-old Chief Engineer says he plans to retire after his two children, who are now in college, finish their studies.
KC Abigail Chin, 3rd Officer: Making a difference from other girls

She made her dad an inspiration in the choice of a career and wished to make herself a difference among other women in her chosen field. Those were the things that drove KC Abigail Chin to pursue a career in the maritime industry.

But prior to liking his father’s job—a maritime professional with the rank of Chief Officer, KC squandered precious time caused by uncertainty over the choice of a future career. She originally liked to be a lawyer, but her mother wanted her to be a nurse. So she took nursing school after high school.

She only lasted a year in nursing and went to take a vocational course to be a caregiver. Neither did she want to continue caregiving, so she dropped out; until KC got enthused by his father’s achievements, who is now a college dean at KC’s alma mater at Capitol University in Cagayan de Oro City. “I wanna be like you,” KC once told her father when she decided to pursue BS Marine Transportation.

Thus, when she was taking the course she realised she liked what she’s doing. “This is it,” she recalls having said with conviction in college. She even cited the scriptural warrant for predestination: “Many are called but few are chosen.”

KC now describes that she was then trapped in a situation that she could be among the few women who chose such a suited course to succeed. “It’s really different when you excel in a man’s world. This I think is a challenge that I have to face and how it’s going to be once you achieve it,” she said.

KC finished her BS Marine Transportation at Capitol University in 2015 and started sailing as a deck cadet on the 114,523 DWT crude oil tanker Kronviken of the Norwegian ship-owner Vikingen Shipping. “It was nice sailing in mixed-nationality crewed ship. They taught me a lot and encouraged me to pursue my job especially when I really showed my interest to learn.”

From a cadet, she became an Ordinary Seaman and got promoted to junior officer in her third ship. She excelled, she says, despite facing victim to bullying and discrimination. “Since I’m a woman some thought that I am not capable of doing my job. At first, it did affect me but I just gave some happy thoughts and the positive thinker in me easily pervaded.”

She says these challenges gave her the guts to strive harder. KC sees herself to grow professionally in tanker shipping. “My transition from cadet to a rating’s role was the difficult part. But overall the work was okay.” She considers that seafaring has made her a tough and a brave woman. “I was always a timid, papa’s girl. So when I first joined the ship in the company of men, I gained more confidence and more knowledgeable in my craft.”

Although it’s a never-ending learning process, KC says she boasts herself of learning a lot. “I would never be promoted [to officer] if I never learned in this profession. I learned a lot, both in theory and practice including how to handle my emotion as well.”

The Third Mate plans to take up a master’s degree through e-learning after sailing for two more contracts, and she might continue upgrading her current rank as a ship officer. She’s been holding a dual ticket for Third and Second Officer roles. “I’ll be like hitting two birds in one stone if plans go alright,” the 29-year-old says, referring to obtaining a master’s degree and possible ascent to a chief officer.

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**Being a woman doesn’t have to be a liability into building a career in this male-dominated industry**

In pursuing a family, KC has no definite plans yet. She’s on board most of the time and is training when she disembarks. She doesn’t know when Mister Right will come. “I will cross the bridge when I get there,” she notes.

But KC believes that being a woman doesn’t have to be a liability into
building a career in this male-dominated industry. She is thankful that her current employer, which employs female seafarers, also takes good care of them. The company also gives chances of promotion if deserved.

It’s KC’s dream to surpass what her dad has achieved as a maritime professional. Though it might be too ambitious, she concedes, saying “I want to reach my Shipmaster’s goal.” KC says his father has been proud of her as she echoes the wisdom: “The success of the father is not about what he has attained but what the son or daughter achieves.”

Historic AMOSUP raffle winner

She must be a lucky union member.

Incidentally, KC Abigail Chin came out Php100,000 richer when she won the AMOSUP raffle’s first prize during the historic ship wheel formation that the union recorded on its 55th anniversary celebration at the MCA concert ground on 11th November 2015.

KC got startled in a recent meet with Sailing Forward as she reminded that the union magazine put up that photo of her receiving the mock cheque from AMOSUP president Dr Conrado Oca along with ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton. Four other seafarers won a motorcycle each during the event.

KC recalls she was undertaking an assessment in the office that day as an upcoming Third Mate when the ship simulator broke down. She couldn’t do anything and nowhere to go as most of her friends were on board. To kill her time, she decided to go to an invitation from her manning agent Westminster Seafarer Management to join the AMOSUP’s 55th anniversary celebration at the Mall of Asia.

The celebration achieved a record areal size of 41.45m x 38.38m as the largest human ship wheel formation. The endeavour generated the participation of 2,276 seafarers and midshipmen, including KC who had just disembarked from her cadetship stint, into forming the maritime industry’s emblem.

Seafarers and cadets participation in the ship wheel formation entitled each of them for their raffle number a chance to win the grand prize money and a motorcycle for each of the four other lucky winners. When Dr Oca was about to draw the winning number during the formation, KC says that she had prayed: “Lord akin na lang yang hundred thousand.” (Lord just let me win that hundred thousand pesos).

And voila! KC’s ticket number was drawn as the lucky winner. After receiving the prize in cold cash, KC treated her fellow cadets to dine out and gave Php1,000 each as their “balato.”
Mauricio Maribao, 2nd Officer: Where farming and shipping go together

Farming and shipping may be worlds apart. But for Mauricio Maribao, nothing spells out the difference when it comes to applying his skills and strengths on both fields.

It's just like working in the farm, says Mauricio or "Nonoy" to friends, of his experience when he sailed on his first merchant ship. Nonoy had worked in the fields at his hometown in Dinagat Island, Surigao del Norte before pursuing a maritime career.

The field under a hot sun akin to a seaman toiling out the hard work at sea.

"Sanay ako sa pagbuwongkal ng lupa kaya hindi ako nahirapan sa trabaho sa barko. (I'm used to cultivating soil, that's why I didn't find it hard working on the ship's tough condition.) Unlike others, he doesn't have much to say about the difficult job on board when he started as a seafarer. "Okay naman ang experience ko lalo na nga sa unang sakay ko. My experience was okay, especially my first time on board.

A graduate of BS Marine Transportation at the University of the Visayas (UV) in Cebu in 1996, Nonoy settled first as one of the "utility" personnel at Baliwag Navigation before finding berth for his cadetship in one of the company's vessels. After more than a year of waiting, his turn came up for apprenticeship on one of the company's general cargo ships. Nonoy says he was so excited when he first boarded the vessel as a cadet. The strong current was his only complaint, while it was just smooth sailing at work. "I was so happy and excited because this is the profession that I wanted," Nonoy says he took a maritime course for one ultimate reason: "It has been my dream ever since," he stressed.

As he worked for various marine employers and ships over the years, Nonoy never forgot the other job that he has loved too—So, what did he do upon having the means to pursue his other venture? Nonoy acquired a huge tract of farmland in Dinagat.

To date, he still dabbles in farming each time he disembarks from his ship and heads home to Dinagat to till the soil and see his family. He simply compares his experience when he sailed on his first ship to that of a farmer used to tilling the field under a hot sun akin to a seaman toiling out the hard work at sea.

He says he bought the property 10 years after his career at sea. The farm in his hometown is now planted with coconut and mango trees. "Mura pa ang lupa noon sa amin. Pero ngayon iba na ang presyo at wala ka nag malubad sa ganoong kalaki. (It was still cheap to buy a big piece of farmland in our hometown at the time. But now it's different, and you can't even find the same huge parcel.) Nonoy
wishes to put up a resort in the area
where he plans to invest and retire
after his seafaring career.

The 2nd Mate says, "seafaring has
been the "bread and butter in
bringing up my family." The father
of four boys, with the eldest at
20-years-old and the youngest at
five, also has secured a home in
Cavite.

While the shipping company has
not assured of his continuous
employment, Nonoy says wants to
continue to work further since he
has passed the Marine Board exam
for his Chief Mate ticket last April.
Consequently, Nonoy hopes to be
promoted in the next ship for his
levelled-up role. "Kung bibigyan ako
ng break ng kompanya, mai-aiko
ka na agad itong bagong lisensya
ko." (If the company will give me a
break, I can immediately perform
the role with my new licence).

Nonoy has been working for two
years with the Greek ship-owner
Nereus Shipping. He disembarked
from the 58,468 DWT bulk carrier
Icon last March, when he sat for and
passed his Chief Mate exam.

Like other marine professionals,
clamouring for the highest rank is
also his dream - to be a Shipmaster.
Nonoy says not until one takes
command for the Master's role, "he
can't say that he knows everything
in this profession."

The 44-year-old Chief Officer
is not in a hurry in groping the
cable for the highest star, though.
"Sometimes it might depend on the
shipping company," he points out.
He explains that companies with
mixed nationality crews could have
lesser chance to get promoted as
their compatriot officers on board
takes the priority. Unlike in full
Filipino-crowed ships, Nonoy says,
there have been better chances
especially among junior officers to
go up the management level.

"We are now competing with a lot
of foreign nationals. Ang bentahe
lang natatang (marinong Filipino) ay
performance. Kung ang mga Insik,
halimbawa, ay gaging sa, lalo na
sa maintenance ng barko, palagay
ko lalong mapapag-iwanan tayo."
Nonoy says. (Our only advantage
is on performance. If the Chinese,
for instance, improves, especially in
the area of vessel maintenance, we
might surely be left behind.)

He cites that the leading factor for
intense competition is the wage
rate as the Chinese can accept a
much lower rate. Apart from the
Chinese, Nonoy noticed that the
Koreans and other Asian nationals
have been increasingly joining the
competition.

Though he says he might
have a good chance to go up
professionally with his current
employer. "Hindi naman ako
naghahanap ng napakataas na
sahod. Gusto ko lang magamit
ang [bagong] lisensya ko." (I'm not
looking for a much higher salary. I
just want to perform my role with
my new license.)

Nonoy believes that Filipino
seafarers have been spending a
lot on training - costing both time
and money - for their Management
Level Course. "I notice that many
seafarers are getting poorer
because of the new system. For me,
training centres should be
regulated to lower the cost of
training fees even if international
training standards is required."
Mary Jane Canencia, 4th Engineer:
‘It made me more mature and stronger’

She just wanted to study for free to pursue a college degree. But Mary Jane Canencia had no idea the course she chose through a scholarship grant would land her a bright future career.

Mary Jane, or MJ for short, says marine engineering was not her first choice when she entered college. “I only wanted to study for free,” she says. As an achiever in high school, she got a full scholarship to pursue the course at the University of Cebu-Lapu Lapu and Mandaue (UCLM).

Apart from the full academic grant, a chief engineer neighbour in her hometown advised and encouraged her to take up Marine Engineering. She heeded the advice and went on to finish her BS in Marine Engineering at UCLM in 2011. MJ had decided to apply for a training and cadetship programme in the shipmanagement company Wallem. “We had healthy competition as cadets. Whoever goes on top gets the priority to get on board.”

board, among others, for six to eight months. Afterwards, she finally sailed on the 81,681 DWT bulk carrier Belo Horizonte for her cadetship. Spending 10 months each on two ongoing vessels, MJ also undertook the rating’s roles of an Oiler and a Motorman before getting promoted to a Fourth Engineer.

As a newbie, MJ says “you have to deal with different attitude and behaviour of the crew. I think it was the first time my ship sailed with a female crew. It’s quite difficult but in my team consisted of Visayans like me, it gave me a welcome respite.”

MJ says the job was tough but she had prepared herself for everything because “you won’t always have others to assist you in your role. But you can ask for help. We are always a team where everyone must observe to be your brother’s keeper. We are not allowed to work alone as part of our safety policy on board.” She added. The challenge, however, is for a female crew like her to prove that she can perform the role.

MJ says they had been trained as ship officers in the office in areas of theoretical applications, self-confidence and attitude on board, among others, for six to eight months. Afterwards, she finally sailed on the 81,681 DWT bulk carrier Belo Horizonte for her cadetship. Spending 10 months each on two ongoing vessels, MJ also undertook the rating’s roles of an Oiler and a Motorman before getting promoted to a Fourth Engineer.

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But the female seafarer did not escape bullying many a woman on board have gone through. Verbal harassment is one of the key issues she has encountered at work. “Hanggang dyan ka na lang, Hindi ka naman magiging opisyal, (You’re just stuck there, you won’t become a ship officer) and you don’t deserve to become an officer,” were some of the offensive and degrading words she had received when she was starting on the job.

While she had argued with a bully, MJ took such remarks as constructive criticisms. “Had I viewed it as destructive, I would have not achieved my goal. It’s up to you how to view such criticism or a gossip, for example, when you’re being talked about. She either confronted it herself or took

MJ says they had been trained as ship officers in the office in areas of theoretical applications, self-confidence and attitude on

As the only female in the engine department, MJ seemed to have gone along well with her all-male crewmates. Maybe because, she
the case to the grievance team on board. But she never took them seriously.

You won’t always have others hand to assist you in your role. But you can ask for help. We are always a team where everyone must observe to be ‘your brother’s keeper’

MJ points out that seafaring has made her more mature and stronger in facing challenges, especially at work. She says working at sea for women is very different from those working ashore. She explains that a land-based female complainant, for instance, can go to the police to complain. “But for us on board the ship, we have to think twice or suffer the consequences of our actions. They included my family who would get worried at home and my employer who might send me home.”

Seafaring is of big help for MJ financially. “I’ll be a hypocrite if I won’t say that working on board ship gives us bigger earnings than many other jobs,” she says. The 4th Engineer has started acquiring a piece of property in her hometown in preparation for a future home. She has finished four job contracts yet over the last five years.

Professionally, MJ says: “As our job becomes routine, you wouldn’t wish to have an incident of breakdown in any part of the machinery. We have to do a better maintenance. While the job gets repetitive to the point that it gets merely easy, you still have to learn more about it.”

MJ disembarked last January from the 115,340 DWT Troviken, an Aframax product tanker owned by the Bergen-based Viken Shipping. She’s taking time honing her skills and acquiring further experience when she rejoins in the same vessel this June. Hopefully, she plans to sit for the Marine Board exam next year for her Third Engineer ticket.

She wants to reach the highest rank of the profession someday. For her, the choice of career and building a family could rather go together. The 25-year-old says: “If I choose to marry and have children, I still have to work to feed my family. But if I pursue to become a chief engineer, I also really have to continue working to reach that goal.”

However, being a female officer, she does not see gender as a hindrance to advance in her career. “You should make it as a form of strength instead of fighting bullying and discrimination in this profession. I want to be regarded someday as a woman who has reached the top of my career.”

She insists that if someone is driven to reach her goal, prejudice at work has no space as a deterrent.
Jorge Juson, Petty Officer: It pays to be loyal

Officers and crews of ships owned by big operators tend to stick longer in their jobs and consequently get rewarded for their allegiance. Such working model can be seen in the case of this petty officer who has spent almost two decades of service with a Japanese owner that operates hundreds of merchant vessels.

However, Jorge Juson did not immediately find such an owner, where he has not run out of job ever since he joined the company as a Wiper in 1998. Juson, or George as friends called him, endured months of suffering in deplorable working and living conditions on board, including delayed wages from the previous owner before fixing himself in a good and responsible operator.

George says prior to working with his current employer, he and former crewmates on a Greek-owned vessel had led miserable lives on board their ship. “Okay lang ang pagkain, pero ang kabina namin walang heater kung taglamig, common ang kubeta at paiquian, sira ang washing machine, lumang-luma na ang kusion ng mga kama.” (The food was alright, but our cabins had no heater on winter, we shared common toilet and bath, washing machine not working, bed cushions were worn out).

He says crewmembers had no place or purposes for recreation in their 1970-built general cargo ship, while they withstood several months of unpaid wages. It occurred between 1995 and ’96. He recalls their condition got worst prompting them to have sought help from the outside - the ITF. So, when the vessel docked in Aarhus, Denmark, their Polish 2nd Mate contacted the union regarding their problem.

George recounts that the ship halted cargo operations as the ITF got on board to meet with the crew and interdicted the vessel. They had demanded the owners to settle all back wages owed to the crew and to fix the defects on the ship. He says when the owners agreed to settle the union’s demands through negotiations, the crew went back to work the next day.

The crew finally received their wages, but the appalling condition on board remained. “Bumawi na lang kami sa sweido,” he adds. (We just had consolations when our salaries got paid.)

Despite the tormenting experience, George, along with other crewmembers, finished a six-month contract as their ageing vessel finally sailed to the scrapyard. And what followed was George’s different experience in a series of
jobs with a new ship-owner, whom he says “really takes care of its crews.”

He now works with Mitsui OSK Lines (MOL). George has been with one of the world’s biggest ship operators for almost 20 years. As a long-time crewmember, he has enjoyed continuous work and received a number of incentives the company provides to ship officers who have reached 15 years of service.

“Dahil isang malaking kumpanya ang MOL at maraming barked, hindi mahirap ang sakayan. Ito marahil ang dahilan kaya rin ako tumagal sa kumpanya. Planado ang pagpapama at bakasyon ng mga tao sa bawat barked.” (Since MOL is a big company with many ships, embarking for a job is not that hard. Deployment and vacation of crews are well planned for each ship.)

George has tried to stick with the company even if there had been an offer for higher wages, for instance, in other manning agencies. “Mahirap din ang palipat-lipat ng kumpanya. Karamihan ng seaman ganyan, at paghanga edad nahihirapan ng sumakay,” he says. (It’s hard to jump from one company to another. Most seafarers are like that, and when they get older it will be difficult to find a new employer.)

George disembarked from the Fuwairit, the 74,067 LNG carrier, last February. He’s constantly consigned to a LNG vessel since he started with the Japanese operator in 1998 and has since sailed the same type of ship in the company’s fleet of LNG tankers. Last April, he and fellow crewmembers left to join their next ship, the 2014-built, 93,315 DWT LNG tanker Papua, for a six-month contract.

The seafaring profession has brought a lot of benefits to George’s family. He has sent his three children to college – one is about to graduate and the two in their junior years. They have a house and a car in Bacolod. He says he and his spouse enjoy spending a vacation in any part of the country whenever he gets home for vacation.

In this profession, he says: “Lakas ng katawan ang puhunan namin. Kung bata ka pa at wala ka ng discipina sa sarili, lagi ka ng sasabit sa medical exam. Ito ang isang kinatatag sa bakasyon ng isang marino.” (Our healthy body is our asset. Even if you’re still young but with no self-discipline, you’ll fail in the medical exam. This normally lets a mariner to spend longer vacation.) He stressed that prior to undergoing their medical test, they went on a diet for two weeks, which means “no liquor intake, less rice but more on veggies and fruits”.

George started as a “seaman trainee” at a ship management firm in Manila for more than a year. He had just completed an Associate in Marine Engineering at Visayas Maritime Academy (VMA) in Bacolod in 1991 when he sailed in one of the shipping company’s managed vessels.

“At the time, once you have a technical knowledge and hardworking, getting on board was easy.” He says he became comfortable in his first ship with compatriots from Bacolod, where he lives. With full Filipino crew who were mostly Ilonggos, working onboard was as comfortable as any other for George.

The 49-year-old Petty Officer plans to retire at the age of 55. “At least pag nag-retire ako sa ganung edad marami pa ako sa magagawa. Kung mas matanda pa, baka naman hindi ko na ma-enjoy ang retirement ko,” he adds. (When I retire by that age, I can do a lot more. Beyond that, I might not enjoy my retirement anymore.)
Edgardo Dalman Jr, Ship Chief Cook: Galleys can do future restaurateur make

He's been assured of a permanent office job at the provincial's capital in their hometown. Apart from that, he has been helping to run the family's thriving restaurant enterprise where he acquired his skills in cooking.

Yet Edgardo Dalman Jr seemed unsatisfied with his 15-year office work and as a "part time" cook. So he opted to choose a more lucrative job. Edgardo, or Jojo to friends, decided to leave his clerical post at Zamboanga del Norte's provincial capitol and give up the prospect of being a restaurateur in exchange for a Ship Cook job. His life-changing decision, he says, is for his "family's better future."

Jojo got himself hired when he applied as a Chief Cook to work on board the 10,278 DWT Apollo Ace in 2010. At sea, the galley of Japan’s Toda Shipping Company-owned general cargo ship became his first platform, where he brought his culinary experience from the family's eatery in Dipolog.

"Because of my involvement in the family's restaurant where I used to help during my free time has prepared to polish my skills in cooking," Jojo says. Their 50-seater diner serves local dishes, with lechon vaca (roast beef) as the top seller. The officers and crew of his first ship, which happened to be all Filipinos, got the first taste of his cooking.

However, there were also challenges, he says. "Hindi mo maitawad na may magreklamo sa pagkain niluto mo. Yung iba mapili pag nasa barko na. Hindi sila maselan sa lupa kasi may perang pambayad. Pero pag sa barko maarte na."

(You can't avoid complaints in the food you prepared. Others become choosy when they get on board. Though they're not like that ashore because they have money to spend. But once on the ship, they turn finicky.)

Jojo has also cooked in mixed-crewed ships. But based on his experience, he says: "Mas mareklamo ang Pinoy kay sa ibang lahi tulad ng mga European. Ang kapwa Filipino dala pa rin ang diskriminasyon hanggang opisina, irereport ka pa. Kahit mataas na ang position nila hihilahin ka pa ring..."
Jojo has taken a number of training in culinary schools to upgrade his skills. He says some employers would require him to undergo cooking lessons before embarking for his new contract. He has finished seven contracts yet, the latest of which was when he signed off last December 2017 from the BW Acorn, one of the 82,589 DWT bulk carriers in the fleet of BW Group.

Jojo admits that seafaring has given his family the needed financial support for the education of his children. The father-of-four kids has enabled to send his children to private schools. Jojo says his priority now is the education of his kids, as the eldest has just entered college, two are in high school and the youngest is a five-year-old. He also has provided for the renovation of their house in Dipolog.

Jojo plans to own or operate his restaurant when he retires from seafaring. He believes that it can happen when he gets to save up and invest in setting up his own diner in the future.

In the meantime, the 46-year-old Chief Cook sees the confines of ship galleys as not just the platforms in staging his expertise as a chef, but also the path where he will sail to his dream to be a future restaurateur. S.F
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**2017 Dividend Rate: 8.11%**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monthly Savings (PhP)</th>
<th>Savings in 5 Years (PhP)</th>
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<th>Total Accumulated Savings in 5 Years (PhP)</th>
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*6.46% was based on average dividend rates from 2015-2017. Actual dividend rate is based on the yearly income of the Fund.*

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<tr>
<th>Savings in 5 Years (PhP)</th>
<th>Total Dividends Earned @ 6.96%* (PhP)</th>
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</table>

*6.46% was based on average dividend rates from 2015-2017. Actual dividend rate is based on the yearly income of the Fund.*

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Beauty titlist takes up seafarers’ welfare as her advocacy

Seafarers’ Queen Jehza Mae Huelar shares with Sailing Forward her experiences that prodded her to bring the crusade to the pageant’s stage.

She has not been acclaimed for her advocacy just for the sake of having a sort of purpose that many beauty titlists talk about after being crowned.

But for beauty titlist Jehza Mae Huelar, who has been hailed the “Seafarers’ Queen,” her crusade runs deeper on a purpose in relation to her personal experience as a young mariner’s daughter and her later encounter in the industry as an adult. Jehza, who was crowned as the Bb Pilipinas Supranational 2018, says it’s because of his father that she chose to champion the welfare of seafarers as her advocacy.
As far as she can remember, her father used to work as a ship radio operator who started his career at a very young age and managed to sustain the family through this job. She says his father would come home once every two years and stayed for just six months, then he would be back on board.

She relates that her dad was never around when she was growing up, and she took that against him. She regretted it, of course, when she realised how hard it was to be a seafarer. “But I can’t imagine how it was for him leaving the family to earn for us. I just wished though, that I was given more time with him before he passed away,” Jehza confides.

As far as she can remember, her father used to work as a ship radio operator who started his career at a very young age and managed to sustain the family through this job. She says his father would come home once every two years and stayed for just six months, then he would be back on board. His father worked for more than 30 years as a seaman.

“He spent most of his time away from us, his children. I was too young to understand everything back then. I never realised the magnitude of his longing for us whenever he’s away until I turned eighteen when my mind and emotions are fully equipped to comprehend his job. We never talked that much,” Jehza was nineteen when her “Papa” passed away.

Jehza says this advocacy that she really wants to continue is probably her way of repaying him for all the sacrifices he made for her education.
those years that they were not able to talk. “Maybe it’s my way of telling him that: Now I understand what he went through.”

But she says “these are nothing compared to what he did for the family. And through this, I somehow feel his presence among the seafarers I met who are our modern heroes.”

Apart from his father’s experience, she was ushered profoundly into the maritime industry by her journalist aunt and some friends in the manning circle. She met a lot of seafarers and eventually found herself helping out seafarers’ children via GASFI, which promotes reading literacy to children and their parents.

“It was voluntary and I loved what I did with them – like joining them in their “Read Aloud” sessions – then hosting some events for AMOSUP?” Jehza says, stressing the big support AMOSUP president Dr Conrad Oca has given her.

Jehza has since met a lot of friends who are and used to be seafarers, including maritime cadets. “Joining the seafarers and listening to them let me realise the different problems they encounter while [working] on board,” she says.

The Seafarers’ Queen believes there have been a lot of organisations that help seafarers in advancing the cause of their welfare. But in her own little way, she hopes to do more. “I can add and lend my voice to that advocacy in the world stage,” she said.

She knows the industry well. She says the world economy is still run by shipping. “I learned that 90% of goods being transported around the world are still carried by ships and most of those ships are manned by our seafarers. And yes, that $5 billion revenue [from seafarers’ remittance] annually to the economy from this industry.”

She plunged deeply into the world of seafaring when she took the job last year as a secretary to the All Japan Seamen’s Union general manager in Manila. She had to quit after two months to cope with her busy schedules when she joined the Bb Pilipinas pageant.

As a woman who’s championing the cause of a sector or profession that is dominated by men, Jehza stresses the importance of women in the maritime industry – not just in support of their husbands, brothers or fathers. She believes women can perform the job of men on board ships and that they should not be discriminated.

Did the mariners’ support boost the Seafarers’ Queen’s bid for a title in the recent Bb Pilipinas contest? Jehza, who obtained her Bachelor of Arts degree at Ateneo de Davao, said it definitely contributed, along with other sectors as well. “Even though the whole country went to the venue for this year’s pageant, a lot of them are seafarers and from the maritime industry. Although I have a lot of support from other sectors as well and from my own hometown Davao, I definitely know that they have helped boost my presence in social media as well.”

She was told that based on the demographics of her organic online votes, some of her votes “did not actually come from traditional pageant voters and supporters. This I believe came from seafarers,” Jehza says.

Jehza will represent the Philippines for the Miss Supranational 2019 that will be held in Poland in September.
Should seafarers learn to code?

As new technology takes over, the role of a seafarer will undoubtedly get more complex. Shipping technology expert Nick Chubb takes a look at the implication of overloading the industry’s most precious resource with new array of technical skills

It’s impossible to deny that operating ships is becoming more and more technical. From integrated bridge systems to multi-fuel propulsion systems, the burden on seafarers to understand increasingly complex on-board systems is increasing.

Due to the isolated nature of ships, it’s important that the crew operating them are able to understand, operate, troubleshoot, and if necessary fix the systems which keep the ship safely running. As ships become more complex and hi-tech, we ask whether the seafarers of the future should be learning to code?

According to Stephen Conley of SES Networks: “To ensure that infrastructure investments function safely and at full capacity, it will take seafarers who understand Java or Python and understand four-stroke propulsion or ECDIS. In order to manage this transition, it will require an overhaul of the way that training has traditionally been provided.” Although I can agree that the way training is provided will need to be overhauled to keep up with changes in how the industry operates, I can’t agree that seafarers will need to learn to code.

Where should seafarers focus their expertise?

Over the last 10 years, an officer’s role on board a typical merchant ship has increasingly moved away from that of “doing” to that of “monitoring”. From the automation of repetitive tasks to the removal of humans from dangerous work on board, it’s obvious that software systems and new technology will increasingly change the role of a seafarer on board ships over the coming years.

At CargoMate, we believe seafarers should be experts in seamanship and not software. As new technology takes over, the role of a seafarer will undoubtedly get more complex. But by asking them to learn an increasing array of new technical skills we are in danger of overloading the industry’s most precious resource. The fundamental skill of any seafarer is that of seamanship, and we believe that no matter how the technological ecosystem changes, the skills of seamanship should remain central to the profession.

We’ve been here before

In the early days of ECDIS, manufacturers got this sorely wrong. By building systems in complete isolation from the end user, the first ECDIS systems were incredibly difficult to use, unreliable, and often misleading, detracting from the bridge team’s ability to effectively navigate the ship. They took a long time to get to grips with and added to the already packed roster of skills for any potential officer to learn before qualifying. Getting a reliable, useful ECDIS was a long and painful process that took many years.

In the 90’s and early 00’s, computers were difficult to use—bulky, and inaccessible to many people. Apple’s launch of the iPhone made a powerful computer available to anyone anywhere. It also represented a step change in user
experience design which meant that anyone anywhere could quickly get to grips with its software. My mum was adamant that she would never use a computer or learn to type until she was given her first iPad. She’s now on Facebook every day and can type quicker than most teenagers.

Far from forcing seafarers to learn to code, at CargoMate, we believe the onus is on technology providers to build systems that focus on human centered design, are intuitive and enhance the end users’ experience or abilities.

**Intuitive, standardised systems are the future**

We are working to digitise and automate the recording of cargo operations to improve the efficiency of ships in port and to improve the working lives of seafarers on board. To do it, we know that we need to make our software as intuitive and easy to use as possible. That’s why we built CargoMate using the same design standards as any mobile app producer would, and have worked incredibly closely with our end users on board ships. We’ve completely redesigned the user interface at least once, and publish updates to the software almost every fortnight.

Providers who build software for ships need to take a leaf out of the tech industry’s book. Design software in collaboration with seafarers, not in isolation. Constantly iterate and improve to make your software as easy to use as possible. Operating a ship is difficult, software and new technology should make it easier. Don’t force your seafarers to learn to code – give your seafarers the tools to become superhuman.  

Nick Chubb MNI is a shipping technology expert and Head of Growth at CargoMate Technologies. He started his career as a deck officer in the Merchant Navy and has been working in technology sales and marketing in London since he came ashore.

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**Seamen’s Hospital’s main building to undergo renovation**

The AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital Manila will undergo renovation to improve the original medical facility.

Established in 1987, the three-storey building houses the hospital’s key departments such as the laboratory, radiology, pharmacy, medical records, out-patient department and ob-gyn clinic. The services at the second floor are the female ward, NICU/Rooming-In, breastfeeding place, operating room complex and CSSR, while the following units at the third floor included: male ward, pediatric ward, chapel, hemodialysis unit, intensive care unit and rehabilitation medicine department.

Most of the services in the building’s three level areas have moved to the newly established South Wing Building that is just next to the old structure.

As planned, the new MRI and CT scan machines with higher capabilities and features will be taken to the former laboratory of the main building.

A dedicated unit for patients undergoing chemotherapy will soon begin. The wards will have a bigger space, making them more conducive for the patients’ treatment and personnel to work as well.

The emergency room will also increase its treatment units. The male ward will be transferred to the former operating room complex at the second floor while the female ward will occupy the former male ward. The ob-gyn department will occupy the former out-patient department.

The International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF), through its Seafarers’ Trust, has made a commitment to contribute for the renovation of the main hospital building.

ITF general secretary Stephen Cotton made the commitment during the inauguration of the South Wing Building, which is an extension of the main structure, in November 2017. Although Cotton did not specify the amount the ITF would contribute for the refit of the hospital that is scheduled for this year.
Telehealth referred cases go up

Telehealth is part of AMOSUP’s commitment to provide healthcare to union members while on board, which the union launched in June 2016 through the Seamen’s Hospital Manila. Since then, care duty to crew has gone beyond the four walls of the union’s hospital network in the Philippines and became readily available to the ship’s emergency assistance system. In 2017, the hospital’s Department of Family Medicine said the total number of cases referred to went up to a total of 178. Figures below show the total number of referral and disease category, including tables for work or rank and referrals on a per company basis. (2016 data are in cluster since there were no quarterly reports furnished within that year).

The graph below depicts the distribution of referred cases per disease category for the year 2017. In the graph, infectious disease topped the total number of cases followed by surgical cases which mostly are onsite injury or work related trauma cases.
Tabulation of the top five case referrals per disease category are listed below. The table is designed to show the shifts in referred cases quarterly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>January to March 2017</th>
<th>April to June 2017</th>
<th>July to September 2017</th>
<th>October to December 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case</td>
<td># of cases</td>
<td>Case</td>
<td># of cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Orthopedic surgery</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dermatology</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Orthopedic surgery</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Influenza</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gastroenterology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gastroenterology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2: Top 3 work area with most number of referrals, 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Q1 2017</th>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Q2 2017</th>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Q3 2017</th>
<th>Work area</th>
<th>Q4 2017</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oiler</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>OILER</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>OILER</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>OILER</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Able bodied seaman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Able bodied seaman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Able bodied seaman</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Messman</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiper</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BOSUN</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chief Engineer</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Crews cooling-work suits launched for trial use**

Japan’s Mitsui OSK Line has trialed the use of specialised cooling-work suits for its crew members to prevent heatstroke at work on board ships and reduce their workload.

The working suits were developed by Teijin Limited, which is a chemical and pharmaceutical company.

The shipping company made the trial starter on a vessel operated and managed by Mitsui OSK Kinkai’s cargo vessel, which is in service between Japan and the Middle East trade.

MOL said the work uniforms are “equipped with rechargeable cooling fans for those working under intense heat” such as in the Kinkai’s cargo ship.

It says the fans draw in outside air and circulate it between the two layers of the uniform, which covers both the front and back of the body. The air flows evenly throughout the uniform, providing a significant cooling effect that enhances the crew members’ comfort and increases their work efficiency.

The company said cooling-work suits is part of MOL’s goal to promote advanced support of safe operation and environment-friendly services by utilising ICT technology.
HEMODIALYSIS UNIT EXPANDS TO ADDRESS INCREASED PATIENTS

This section of the Seamen’s Hospital prides itself in providing the standard of care that is comparable to any other unit in major hospitals around the Philippines.

If a kidney fails and shuts down, that is incompatible with life. Fortunately a treatment exists that replaces the function of a failed kidney. That treatment is called hemodialysis.

At the AMOSUP Seamen’s Hospital, which is a tertiary level hospital, it is essential that its facility can provide hemodialysis treatments to its patients. If that kidney failure is permanent in nature then that patient will require regular hemodialysis treatments.

The Hospital has two populations of hemodialysis patients. Those patients whose kidney failure develops as a course of their illness while they are admitted and are given hemodialysis treatments on an in-patient basis. The other includes patients who have long standing kidney failure but are not admitted and undergo treatments on an out-patient basis.

The hemodialysis patients of Seamen’s Hospital have been steadily growing ever since it started in 2002. As such, it was only a matter of time before the number of patients would go over the capacity of the unit to accommodate everyone.

It had reached a point where hemodialysis treatments were ongoing close to 24 hours a day. A major problem encountered by the section. Fortunately, Seamen’s Hospital was able to expand its hemodialysis unit and doubled the number of machines to service more of its members and dependents who need this life-sustaining treatment.

Seamen’s Hospital is unique in that it provides quality hemodialysis treatments to its patients free of charge, year round. As such it is dependent on the constant support of AMOSUP.

The Hemodialysis Unit has just been recently expanded to address the major problem of its ever-growing number of hemodialysis patients. The question then is whether hemodialysis services may be offered in other Seamen’s Hospitals outside of Manila.

Hemodialysis units are closely monitored by several accreditation bodies; from the Department of Health to PhilHealth to the Philippine Society of Nephrology every year. This unit of the Hospital has always been accredited since 2002 without any major discrepancies. In fact, it has been granted the privilege to expand the unit in 2017.

The Seamen’s Hospital Hemodialysis Unit prides itself in providing the standard of care that is comparable to any other unit in major hospitals around the Philippines.

The Unit provides over 700 in-patient and out-patient treatments, on the average, every month. As a member of the Renal Disease Control Program or REDCOP, it regularly submits reports to the Philippine Renal Disease Registry.

The hospital currently has 10 hemodialysis stations operation, the Fresenius 4008S Hemodialysis machines with Diasepe filters. It also uses an automatic dialyzer reprocessing machine called Renatron. It also operates double reverse osmosis machines to produce ultrapure water for Hemodialysis treatments. It has fully reclining and automatic chairs for the patients.
Mariners bridging course resumes

Government has approved fresh fund for skills upgrading and bridging programme in the marine profession as part of a measure in the steady supply of Filipino ship officers on oceangoing ships.

Through the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA), PhP50 million worth of scholarship grants have been allotted to graduates of BS Mechanical Engineering (BSME) and BS Electrical Engineering (BSEE) who wish to continue their courses into the field of BS Marine Engineering (BSMarE).

OWWA said it will give priority to applicants who are a) Overseas Filipino Workers-seafarers that are active OWWA-members, b) immediate dependents/beneficiaries of OFWs, both land-based and sea-based who are active or former members of OWWA, and c) next-of-kin of OFWs up to the first degree of consanguinity.

Academic and shipboard training

OWWA has identified the maritime schools that offer the bridging programme to BSMarE. These include the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP), Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS), JB Lacson Maritime Foundation (Iloilo City), Zamboanga City State Polytechnic College and Visayas Global College.

Upcoming curriculum from BSME to BSMarE has changed the requirements in academics from 14 to 39 units, while shipboard training is at 40 units, bringing the total number of 79 units from the previous 54. Although duration for academic study remains at six months, shipboard training has been prolonged from six to 10 months.

OWWA says tuition and other miscellaneous fees for each beneficiary has increased from PhP38,120 to PhP50,000. Monthly stipend for the six-month course is set at PhP30,000 or a total of PhP80,000 for each recipient.

Previous beneficiaries

Prior to the new scheme, the agency had funded two experimental classes that harnessed 100 trainee-scholars under its so-called “bridging or dugtong aral” programme. OWWA implemented the scheme as a “stop-gap measure” to temporarily arrest the shortage of officers for overseas vessels.

Since first implemented in school-year 2008-09, a total of 271 grantees have benefited from the bridging programme in some parts of the country that lasted in 2012. It had a total disbursement cost of PhP10,721 million.

According to OWWA’s records, majority of beneficiaries as of April this year, started as engine cadets or 73% who are now in their respective engineer ranks (from 4th Engineer to Chief Engineer). The rest who were in their ratings roles have also scaled the engine officer posts.

Five shipping companies that have employed the availing seafarers include St Paul Maritime, World Marine Panama Santoku Senpaku Company, K Line Shipmanagement (Singapore), and Pine Crest Shipping Corporation.

Apart from having addition in the number of marine engineers, OWWA said the Mariners’ Dugtong Aral left awardees with higher positions and salary rates.
MAAP graduates 169 cadets of Class 2018

Transportation secretary Arthur Tugade highlighted love of parents and country and to follow rules and regulations as the finishers’ key to their journey for a financially rewarding career.

The Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) has graduated its first batch of cadets belonging to its Class of 2018.

The commencement exercises on 23rd May saw 169 senior cadets from various parts of the country who marched up the stage to receive their diplomas in BS Marine Transportation and BS Marine Engineering at MAAP Mariveles campus in Bataan.

Department of Transportation secretary Arthur Tugade, the graduation ceremonies guest-of-honour, highlighted the love of parents in his message to the graduates. He said he has not encountered anyone who rose to success without having embraced the importance of love to their parents.

Message to graduates

“Kailangan ang pagmamahal sa magulang ay hindi dapat mawala,” (Love of parents should always be there) he said, stressing that “if you wish to be successful, bind the family together because the Filipino culture of success is founded by the parents and bonded by love in the family,” he stressed.

The secretary told the finishers: “Hindi naman hinahingi na bibili kayo ng mga mamahalin upang ipakita ang pagmamahal, subalit konting gesture lamang na sila' naaalala ninyo. Sa kanya malaking bagay na ito sapagkat hindi na nila kaya makikita araw-araw sa inyong paglalayong.” (They don’t ask you to buy expensive things to show your love, but just a gesture that you really remember them. For them it means a lot as you won’t see each other as frequently when you start sailing away on.)

Continue to love your parents, Secretary Tugade said. For this, he wittily made a little request from the midshipmen: “give your first allotment to your parents,” to the laughter and big applause of the crowd.

Secretary Tugade also emphasised the love of country among the cadets. “Love our country. You can have as many girlfriends as you
want when you sail away to foreign ports, but there is only one country where you can always go back to. And you will tell the strangers you will meet: How beautiful the Philippines is."

He also reminded the graduating cadets to follow rules and regulations in their profession. "There is no shortcut to this. You must follow it." He stressed. "There is a need to refine, improve or modify - follow it first. These [sets of] rules are the key to your safe journey for you to have a financially rewarding employment." he added.

The transport secretary told graduates and guests, "this is the best graduation exercise I have attended." Apart from witnessing the cadets’ performance in martial drills at their best – from formation of troops to pass and review – and a campus tour of the facilities, he led the inauguration of the academy’s newly installed workshop skills laboratory. "I have also seen many maritime institutions, and I say without reservation or fear that MAAP is the best," Secretary Tugade added.

**Historical footnote**

President Conrado F Oca of AMOSUP, which manages and runs the academy, noted that its Class of 2018 has made an "important historical footnote" as MAAP marks its 20th founding anniversary this year.

"The past two decades of MAAP has been a period of pioneering innovations and continuous growth that is unprecedented in Philippine maritime education. And this batch is the beneficiary of those developments over the last 20 years," said Dr Oca, who is also the chairman of the academy’s governing board.

Through the years the cadets have become "receptive and responsive to reforms as MAAP kept a steady course, unfazed by challenges, and resolutely committed to reach out to the youth of this generation and offer them the opportunity of a better life," Dr Oca said.

The academy also conferred diplomas to two candidates in master's degree in Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering, along with post graduate certificates in maritime education and training to 14 candidates during the graduation rites. SF
Fair pay at sea

By MARK DICKINSON

Mark Dickinson, general secretary at Nautilus International, will be leading the seafarers’ delegation in the ILO in Geneva on behalf of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) – the organisation that brings together the world’s maritime trade unions.

Cast an eye around your home. Much of what you see arrived by sea. Furniture, washing machines, crockery, clothes, home entertainment systems and food – 90% of all the world’s ‘goods’, in fact – have been packed in containers and spirited across oceans before they arrive in our shops.

Crewing the world’s roughly 52,000 ships are approximately 1,647,000 seafarers many of whom work dizzyingly long hours, in dangerous conditions, and for far too many, in return for a pittance.

Despite our dependence on their toil, it is surprising how little most people know of these maritime workers.

Most are required to put in a 90-hour week when they are at sea. Stopovers in port can often be just 24 hours – leaving scarcely any time to leave the ship. And for this, far too many receive the globally-agreed minimum wage of just £440 a month ($614, at the current exchange rate of £1=$1.40).

Bananas might well be “organic” or ‘fair trade’ and timber ‘sustainably sourced’, but the human cost of shipping goods remains well beneath the public radar. The International Commission on Shipping (ICONS) put the situation in strikingly bald terms. “10 – 15% of the world’s seafarers work in slave conditions, with minimal safety, long hours for little or no pay, (and) starvation diets.”

Many ship owners offer far better conditions than the worst, but even the best require longer hours, in hazardous conditions, and greater personal privations than almost any other line of work.

Although in most aspects of their lives seafarers are beyond the reach of domestic laws, they are covered by a global minimum wage agreement. This is negotiated under the aegis of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva and is based on a formula that seeks to maintain the purchasing power of an agreed minimum monthly basic wage for an AB originally set at £16 in 1947 (ILO Convention 76). The good news is that the rate of pay has been regularly reviewed and updated and over the decades has been increased but still only stands at £440 per month.

The bad news is that the basic pay is so shockingly low. The current rate is around £2.12 an hour – a rate that should surely shame us all.

The better shipping lines pay better, it is true, but the global minimum is the peg from which everything starts. A rise in this basic rate, would benefit all seafarers.

Negotiations to set the global minimum start in June in Geneva – it is the only internationally-agreed pay floor applied to an entire industry. The talks take place within the Joint Maritime Commission, an ILO standing body that has brought together ship owners and seafarer representatives since 1920.

I will be leading the seafarers’ delegation on behalf of the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) – the organisation that brings together the world’s maritime trade unions.

The global minimum wage is based on a formula related to currency fluctuations and buying power in a number of countries that reflect the main shipping and the countries of labour supply. When you consider what seafarers endure at work and the efficiencies that the merchant navy has achieved in recent years, as well as the importance of cargo carrying to the global community, it is clear that the times have come for a significant rise, whatever starting point is delivered by the ILO formula.

Independent evidence of falling costs and greater efficiency is plentiful. Maritime business consultants Moore Stephens, for example, undertake an annual survey that shows that operating costs are on a downward trajectory across all types of carrier. Richard Greiner, Moore Stephens shipping partner, says: “This is the fifth successive year-on-year reduction in overall ship operating costs”.

Localised studies reflect this. One by Maritime UK, for example, revealed that: “over five years, the UK maritime sector experienced a 12.7% increase in turnover, 6.6% increase in gross value added and 3.9% increase in employment”.

These studies come at the end of a long period of cost reductions for
ship owners. Viewed over a couple of decades, shipping has become significantly more efficient and the number of seafarers has tumbled. Operators now accept that staffing levels are as low as they can safely go with ordinary seafarers now doing demanding and complex jobs. The time has surely come to pass on some of these efficiency gains to these lower-paid workers on whose almost unseen toil we rely so heavily?

There is precedent elsewhere in our industry for a rise. The International Bargaining Forum, which covers around 10% of the world’s ships, recently concluded a deal that will see wages increase 2.5%.

The case I will be making in Geneva is fundamentally a moral one, and it is one for which I think there is an increasing public support.

Research by Morgan Stanley shows that today significantly more consumers base purchasing decision on perceptions of how ethically companies act, than they did six years ago. And ethical considerations are more important among young consumers than the general population.

Of course, we will need to build awareness of conditions at sea. That is why we have launched www.fairpayatsea.org. I hope that soon bringing the welfare of seafarers to mind will be an instinctive reflex among consumers. Campaigners against third-world clothing sweatshops have already achieved this, as several retail multinationals have discovered to their cost when their suppliers’ unacceptable labour practices have been publicised.

There is no shortage of raw material when it comes to seafarers’ conditions. Theirs is the most physically dangerous, emotionally destructive, and socially-isolating occupation on earth. Many circle the globe in penury, as their wages are unpaid – the ITF routinely collects over £30 million a year in unpaid back wages. Port chaplains describe the heart-breaking gratitude they experience when they give seafarers £10 phone sims, allowing them their first contact with home for weeks.

I will also be pointing employers to a fascinating study by a group of British-based economists which shows that raising minimum levels of pay – particularly in traditionally low-paid sectors – can have a significantly beneficial impact on productivity. Drawing on aggregate data from the British economy since the 1999 introduction of the minimum wage, Professors Richard Croucher, Marian Rizov and Thomas Lange conclude that “our results support suggestions that public policy has not fully realised the potential benefits of a fair minimum wage.”

I’m optimistic for the seafarers’ prospects at the Geneva negotiations. And whatever progress the union side makes, it will allow us all to scan retail aisles in slightly better conscience. Whatever sweat seafarers might expend in future to fill those shelves, I am determined that in future it will be better rewarded.
IMO urged to take heed of human factors in smart ship review

Nautilus International is backing two papers submitted to the meeting by the International Transport Workers’ Federation and the International Federation of Shipmasters’ Associations, warning of the potential for confusion arising from the lack of an agreed definition of an autonomous ship and other related issues.

Neglecting “human factors” in the drive towards autonomous shipping could pose big threats to safety and the environment, Nautilus International has warned ahead of top-level talks on the issues.

As the International Maritime Organisation’s (IMO) maritime safety committee begins discussions on its two-year review of the regulatory framework governing the operation of autonomous ships, the Union is urging delegates to take note of the findings of a survey of almost 1,000 maritime professionals carried out by the Nautilus Federation of more than 20 seafaring unions.

The study, which will be presented to delegates attending the talks on the IMO regulatory scoping exercise, revealed that 84% of maritime professionals consider automation to be a threat to seafaring jobs and 85% believe unmanned remotely controlled ships pose a threat to safety at sea.

However, more than 60% of survey respondents said they felt automation has the potential to make the shipping industry safer - provided it is introduced in a ‘hybrid’ way, enhancing onboard operations, helping to cut fatigue and excessive workloads, minimising paperwork and bureaucracy, assisting with predictive and preventive maintenance, providing additional support for decision-making, and reducing or even eliminating some dangerous or repetitive tasks.

Nautilus is backing two papers submitted to the meeting by the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and the International Federation of Shipmasters’ Associations (IFSM).

These warn of the potential for confusion arising from the lack of an agreed definition of an autonomous ship and stress the need for more attention to be paid to human/machine interface issues, as well as the interaction between autonomous ships and conventional vessels operating in the same environment.

The seafarer representatives also call for a focus on human element requirements; for shipboard and shore-based personnel, construction and engineering standards for enhanced redundancy and reliability, cyber-security, legal implications regarding jurisdiction and responsibility and accountability for remotely-controlled operations.

The papers also call for “a degree of caution to ensure that an inappropriate regulatory framework is not hastily put in place in a leap of faith by the IMO on the assurances of technology suppliers”.

It is absolutely vital that people are not forgotten in the scramble to bring smart ships onto the seas. The debate so far has concentrated too much on technological and economic factors.

Seafarers are calling on the IMO to focus on human element requirements and not to take a leap of faith based on assurances from technology suppliers.
The IMO's maritime safety committee is being urged to take note of the Nautilus Federation report on maritime professionals' views on autonomous shipping. "Properly introduced, automation and digital technologies could transform shipping in a positive way - making it safer and more efficient - but managed poorly, they could undermine safety and erode the essential base of maritime skills, knowledge and expertise," commented Mr Dickinson, Nautilus general secretary Mark Dickinson.

"We hope delegates at the IMO's maritime safety committee will carefully consider the feedback gathered in the Nautilus Federation survey," he added. "There is no kneejerk opposition to technology, but rather a genuine desire to see it used in a way that improves the safety and efficiency of the shipping industry and the working lives of all within it."  

**MAAP'S NEW WORKSHOP SKILLS LAB.** Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade looks over one of the engines at the newly installed Workshop Skills Laboratory the Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) has just inaugurated.

The secretary, who led the launch last 23rd May 2018, along with MAAP president Eduardo Ma R Santos and Governing Board chairman Dr Conrado Oca, got updated from Chief Engineer Cleto Del Rosario (pictured right), MAAP shipboard training director, on the academy's latest facility and equipment.

The Workshop Skills laboratory is the first in the country that is most equipped with the requirement of CHED Memorandum Order 38, Series of 2016 Workshop Skills Training ashore in consonance with Chapter II of the 1978 STCW Convention as amended.

The lab has structured workshop skills training programme with equipment such as complete set of tools, refrigeration trainer, instrument panel tester with electrical measuring device, liquid level trainer, tank sounding simulation area, 2-stroke diesel engine, operational diesel engine with generator, duplex filter, heat exchangers, turbo charger, purifier, evaporator, emergency air compressor, engine-driven air compressor, disassembled combustion engine parts, various types of valves, pumps and high quality calibration instruments that can be utilised for training in dismantling, inspecting, repairing and reassembling in accordance with manuals and good engineering practice.

It is a combination of classical engineering studies and operation-oriented training that can provide the midshipmen the necessary knowledge and skills suited for modern marine vessels. The Workshop Skills training programme is designed to combine with the 12-month seagoing service requirement to qualify for certification as Officer-in-Charge of an Engineering Watch in line with MAAP's mission to provide quality education and training to its midshipmen.
QUOTE IN ACTION

“These [sets of] rules are the key to your safe journey for you to have a financially rewarding employment.”

Department of Transportation secretary Arthur Tugade, in his message to graduates of MAAP class of 2018, reminding them to avoid shortcuts and that they must follow them.

“They are to empower them or support their quest to make the union stronger.”

ITF lead person union building and youth work (Asia Pacific) Artika Ashdhir, on challenges the youth faces in trade unionism.

“Only a few understand and appreciate why seafarers have to undergo training.”

MARINA OIC at the Office of Executive Director, Atty. Joy C. Baneg, on the maritime administration’s advocacy to carry out STCW 101 among seafarers and manning agencies to impart the importance of compliance.

“We have to do more efforts to align their thoughts in doing away with such discrimination in employment.”

Pozitibong Marine Philippines president Jeaneen Rederi Garrido, on pushing shipowners who still refuse HIV positive seafarers to work on their ships.

“Joining the seafarers and listening to them let me realise the different problems they encounter while [working] on board.”

Bo Filipinas Supranational 2018 Jehza Huelar, on continuing her cause for seafarers welfare.

“While the job gets repetitive to the point that it gets merely easy, you still have to learn more about it.”

4th Engineer Mary Jana Canencia, on the cyclical nature of her role on board and how she progresses to acquire more knowledge along the way.