Dear Members,

Times are testing, and the situation is challenging, but the good news is that you are not alone, and we are all working together. InterManager is urging members to:

- Look after your staff both at sea and ashore
- Report any issues which are making your life miserable in order to assign resources and try to improve it immediately

Who could have thought that we will all be reading this Dispatch in a completely different context? The context is that of the world being affected by COVID-19.

The first wave of denial and disbelief passed, and I hope to report that Members of InterManager are by now well-adjusted and making sure that a “business as always” attitude prevails. Our organisations have been around for many years, and our procedures have been tested in many different situations. Today we had to tune them to the surrounding world and its initial problems, which seem to be settling down. Once again, it shows how important our connections are, especially our network of trusted partners: shipping is a truly global industry with a plethora of stakeholders.
In the first 2-3 weeks since the breakdown, we had to spend time identifying issues and then provide immediate solutions: the biggest challenge remains persuading local authorities to co-operate with us.

Realising this, the shipping industry quickly got together, and 25 organisations formed the COVID-19 International Group, which pooled and pulled resources. Such a body was able to develop an excellent rapport with WHO, ILO, and IMO, and our cooperation is flourishing. We were able to find a solution for:

- Expiring certificates, both ships and crew
- Deliveries of provisions and spare parts
- Deliveries of Personal Protective Equipment for sea staff
- Medical support for our seafarers
- Smooth cargo operation in the majority of ports
- Fuelling of ships
- Establishing measures to limit contact between port officials and ship staff

Another challenge is airlines, which decided to reduce flight frequency or to stop flights altogether. Many of our members introduced an extension of seafarers’ contracts for 30 days in order to evaluate the situation and allow travel arrangements to mature in the new situation.

Our members are incredibly cautious about the delicate financial balance many of their seafarers found themselves in, especially with regards to disrupted rosters and schedules. InterManager members applied Best Industry Practice by establishing family support groups, keeping in close contact with seafarers and their loved ones, and maintaining the flow of information.

Seagull / Videotel produced a training video almost immediately, and ISWAN provided a film with psychological support. For links, please check further in this issue of DISPATCH.
Singh Marine Management Limited joins Intermanager

Singh Marine Management Limited (SMML) is a specialised Marine Human Resources company operating in the Ukraine and serving a worldwide client base.

SMML specialises in recruiting merchant navy officers to work on all types of merchant ships worldwide. It also has the capacity to send ratings when required. SMML has been providing qualified seafarers since 2003 from Odessa.

SMML was established as a marine recruitment company and licensed by the Government of Ukraine to send crew to work on merchant and other ships. As of today, SMML works with about 30 clients regarded as top-notch ship owners and ship managers.

SMML’s clients are based in all major shipping centres such as Kuala Lumpur, London, Hamburg, Oslo, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Hong Kong, Singapore, Mumbai, Dubai, Glasgow, and Toronto.

Predominantly, our officers and ratings come from various parts of the Ukraine, but we also have some of our seafarers from other parts of Western and Eastern Europe, as well as in Russia. Our company selects and trains seafarers to be employed with foreign shipowners and managers on a variety of ships.

SMML has experienced crew for all types of vessels, from highly specialised Gas Carriers to general Bulk Carriers. It also serves crewing needs for vessels types such as offshore vessels and yachts.

Presently, Dr. Binay Singh (CEO) of SMML is working on a project to create “A World of Seafarers” where all seafarers – irrespective of nationality and status – can get jobs based on merit alone.

Dr. Binay Singh’s life mission is to serve the seafarer’s community across the globe to the best of his abilities, and bring success and happiness to a seafarer’s life.

Dr. Singh wants to bring positivity, love, and enthusiasm for all those people who are involved in Maritime Manning.
Established in 2012, J-Marine is a dynamically developing company. Our company can offer repair and conversion to any type of vessel and can assist our clients during docking periods by sending experienced project managers and supervisors to the repair facility for oversight of the entire project.

We specialise in:

1. Exhaust scrubbers and BWMS (ballast water management system)
Scope of our services:

- Feasibility
- Technical documentation
- 3D scanning
- Workshop documentation
- Fabrication of pipelines in workshop (all kind of pipes – steel, stainless steel, GRE)
- Fabrication of steel constructions
- Fitting aboard the vessel at berth in Poland or any European port, or during sea voyages
- Repair damaged, pre-existing scrubber systems.

We can offer and install ballast water treatment system from reputable manufacturers from all over the world. We can provide documentation, design, and installation of systems onboard.

We have experience with fitting of exhaust scrubber systems and BWMS without drydocking the vessel: sea chests are built on water with the help of diver squads.

2. A-frames (hydraulic operated stern lifting devices)

A-frames are typically tailor-made to a customer’s exact vessel and operational requirements, and they meet the demands of heavy, subsea work in highly-corrosive environments. Our A-frames are designed to perform a broad range of operations, such as offshore and subsea load handling, and the launch and recovery of specialised tools and equipment. Installation can be done in any port, all around the world.

3. Fitting of flow meters on fuel systems for remote (online) monitoring fuel consumption

4. Supply and installation of GRP, GRE, GRVE pipes

5. Hydraulic and electric works

6. All types of general ship’s repairs and installations

Our services also include 3D scanning, and technical and workshop documentation.

We can offer our services all around the world, in any port or during operation of the vessel.

We can also provide a service for the repair of damaged, pre-existing systems.

As well, we offer quick response groups in case of reported problems on ships.

The list of the ships where we have installed the Scrubber system and BWTS is very long. The most recent ships include:

Songa Winds, Challenge, Peace, City of Hong Kong, Anne and Grete Sibum, FS Ipanema, Elisalex, Elisabeth, Edzard and Erika Schulte, Paris Express, Madrid Express.

Our company is proud to announce that in these challenging times, we are preparing the Deckhouse with internal Ballast water treatment to four vessels: Edzard Schulte, Elisabeth Schulte, Erika Schulte and Elisalex Schulte.
Coronavirus: What to do on a ship

The ICS has issued guidance about seafarers’ protection amid the outbreak of COVID-19.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) is the name given to the 2019 novel coronavirus. COVID-19 is the name given to the disease associated with the virus. SARS-CoV-2 is a new strain of coronavirus that has not been previously identified in humans.

While animals are believed to be the original source, the virus spread is now from person to person (human-to-human transmission).

The virus is mainly transmitted via small respiratory droplets through sneezing, coughing, or when people interact with each other for some time in close proximity (usually less than one metre). These droplets can then be inhaled, or they can land on surfaces that others may come into contact with, who can...
then get infected when they touch their nose, mouth, or eyes. The virus can survive on different surfaces from several hours (copper, cardboard) up to a few days (plastic and stainless steel). However, the amount of viable virus declines over time and may not always be present in sufficient numbers to cause infection.

The incubation period for COVID-19 (i.e. the time between exposure to the virus and onset of symptoms) is currently estimated to be between one and 14 days.

We know that the virus can be transmitted when people who are infected show symptoms such as coughing. There is also some evidence suggesting that transmission can occur from a person that is infected even two days before showing symptoms; however, uncertainties remain about the effect of transmission by non-symptomatic persons.

Seafarers (be that aboard a ship or on leave) should inform their healthcare provider if they have recently visited an area where COVID-19 has been reported within the past 14 days, or if they have been in close contact with someone who has travelled to a place where COVID-19 has been reported and who is experiencing respiratory symptoms.

The Standard Infection Protection and Control (IPC) precautions emphasise the importance of both hand and respiratory hygiene, in particular:

- Regular hand washing by crew and passengers using soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser of at least 65-70% alcohol.
- Avoiding touching the face, particularly the nose, eyes, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Seafarers and passengers should be encouraged to cover their nose and mouth with a disposable tissue when coughing, sneezing, wiping, and blowing their nose and dispose of the tissue immediately after use.
- If a tissue is unavailable, seafarers should cover their nose and mouth, and cough or sneeze into the crook of their elbow.
- All used tissues should be disposed of immediately into a waste bin.
- Seafarers should aim to adhere to social distancing guidelines where possible (at least one metre, or three feet) from other people, particularly those with who are experiencing symptoms similar to those of COVID-19 (cough, sneeze, or fever). Failing to adhere to social distancing guidelines can dramatically increase your risk of cross-infection.

Seafarers must be provided with ample time and opportunity to wash their hands regularly, especially after coughing, sneezing, using tissues, or after possible contact with respiratory droplets or surfaces that might have been contaminated.

Although protective gear (such as face masks and disposable gloves) provide some degree of protection, the routine use of protective gear is not generally recommended by WHO as protection against COVID-19. WHO advises that the use of face masks is appropriate only when coughing or sneezing.

If an individual is otherwise asymptomatic, it is only necessary to wear a mask if the person is taking care of a person with a suspected COVID-19 infection: hand and respiratory hygiene are considered the most effective way to avoid contamination.
ISWAN FAQs re: Coronavirus

1. My contract has ended, but my company can’t repatriate me due to port restrictions. Is my contract extended until I am repatriated?

Many seafarers are being asked by their companies to extend their contracts by at least a month. With many countries (such as India and the Philippines) locking down, it is probably best to consider remaining onboard and extending your contract as it is unlikely that you will be able to fly home even if you can leave the vessel and exit the port.

Extending the contract should only be used with appropriate safeguards to protect seafarers, such as obtaining their consent and ensuring that they do not lose their accrued annual leave or right to repatriation. Check with your flag state to see if shipowners can extend this flexibility to you without being in danger of breaching their MLC obligations.

Your employer will be liable to pay you for any such extension of your tour of duty.

During this period, you will still be entitled to all your other MLC/Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA) rights. Check with the flag state if in doubt as to MLC implementation on your ship.

2. I have managed to leave the vessel, but I can’t leave the country due to no flights to my home country. Will I still be paid by my company?

Under the MLC, your company should be responsibly repatriating you and for paying you until you reach home in accordance with your SEA. If for any reason your company is not paying for your accommodation costs while you wait for your flight you should contact your union if you are a member.

If the shipowner does not pay for your
repatriation and associated expenses, such as accommodation, food, medical bills, etc. then you may need to call the MLC financial security provider (details available onboard, but usually the P&I Club) to cover these costs. You can also contact your embassy or consulate. Local seafarer missions may also be able to assist.

3. I am due to start a new contract and join a vessel, but I cannot leave my country.

Shipowner organisations and unions around the world are trying hard to get governments to allow free movement of seafarers for crew changes. Stay in contact with your crewing agency or company, and take advice from your union. The industry is doing its best to keep ships and trade moving, and consequently trying to facilitate the movement of seafarers.

4. I am concerned about my family back home. What can I do?

It is essential for you to stay in regular contact with your family back home. If you are onboard, your company and/or the internet provider may provide extra data or calls at a free or reduced rate. If you are worried and feel anxious, then contact SeafarerHelp or one of the seafarer welfare missions.

5. I am onboard, and I think that I have a fever. What should I do?

You have a duty to protect yourself while at sea, and a duty to protect others who may be affected by your activities. You should follow the general advice published by the World Health Organization (WHO), The International Maritime Health Association (IMHA), and The International Chamber of Shipping (ICS). There may also be a company policy (check their website) and perhaps flag state advice.

You should also seek advice from the onboard medical officer and inform your line manager/master.

6. I am feeling depressed and anxious about the coronavirus pandemic.

It is only natural to feel anxious about the current situation. If you are onboard, share your concerns with your fellow crew. Don’t keep checking news websites. ISWAN has produced a video that provides guidance and information on what you can do to manage your mental health – see https://bit.ly/ISWANMH1

There are organisations that you can contact, such as SeafarerHelp or the seafarer welfare missions.

7. Are seafarer centres still open?

Unfortunately, most of the seafarer centres around the world are now closed. However, many of the chaplains and welfare workers are still working to support seafarers. To contact a local chaplain or welfare worker, please see the seafarer centre directory at ISWAN.

With thanks to Charles Boyle of Nautilus International for help in producing these FAQs.
Adapting methods for seafarers’ ministry in uncertain times

BY JASON ZUIDEMA

Image: When seafarers arrived in the Port of Montreal on April 3, they texted local Chaplain David Rozeboom for some sweets which he then purchased and delivered to the gangway.

The coronavirus crisis has deeply impacted the ministry methods of Christian seafarers’ welfare charities around the world. Ship visitors and chaplains have had to adapt their ways of ministry to find new opportunities to serve seafarers, and have had to take new measures to respect all health and safety concerns. To find out more, we surveyed hundreds of social media posts from ministries around the world. These social media posts reveal the intense challenge of balancing
health and safety with the continuing desire to serve seafarers.

The challenges for us and for seafarers are many. Most cargo ships continue to transport goods around the world to keep our store shelves stocked, except on cruise ships, where crews are being pared down to minimum levels as cruising has effectively stopped. The remaining seafarers are sailing under increased pressure and fatigue with extended contracts, as getting fresh crew members is unmanageable with national borders closed and cities on lockdown around the globe. Even when countries designate cargo ship crews as essential workers, signing on or off is practically impossible for the foreseeable future, as many airlines have cancelled flights. Seafarers on board are exhausted, and the seafarers at home are desperate for a paycheck.

As cities and ports have instituted social isolation programs, traditional forms of ministry like visiting seafarers on their ships, welcoming them in drop-in centres, and transporting them to shops in town is now more or less impossible. Seafarers’ ministries around the globe have had to come to what seems like a standstill.

So, is ministry still possible?

Before we think about our possibilities, it is important to emphasise: even if ministries have the will to help, there is every reason to err on the side of caution. Many ministries rely on older volunteers that are in the most vulnerable age group for the virus. Many chaplains are in vulnerable age groups, and others are vulnerable due to other health concerns. A chaplain or volunteer who gets infected can unknowingly transmit the disease to others in their community, which could lead to hundreds more cases and more deaths. From the seafarers’ perspective, too, we should remember that we are more likely to carry the virus to them than they are to us. Ship visitors staying away is for their own protection, yes, but primarily for the protection of seafarers.

There still seems to be some openings for ministry. These openings require caution, creativity, and hard work, but they also address a time of great need for seafarers. Seeing all the ways ministries are finding these openings and stepping into them for seafarers was one of the most rewarding parts of this survey.

New approaches to in-person interaction

In ports where local authorities are allowing it, chaplains are practicing ‘gangway only’ visits. These visits pay close attention to local port regulations and all relevant health guidance. Ship visitors practice social distancing and frequent hand washing and wear PPE as advised.

In these cases, chaplains come to the gangway without entering the ship as they would normally do. Chaplain David Rozeboom of the Ministry to Seafarers in Montreal, Canada writes: “We remain active in the Port of Montreal visiting with seafarers on the deck of the ship and trying to arrange items that the crew need.” He makes deliveries of literature or SIM cards via a mail bucket.

The London Tilbury Seafarers’ Centre, managed by Queen Victoria Seamen’s Rest, continues to deliver to gangways: “We are still providing a service to seafarers berthed at
Tilbury whilst the seafarers’ centre is closed due to port restrictions. We will provide a ‘one stop’ delivery to the ship gangway. Please call [contact number] with a list of your top-up/data sim requirements (limited toiletries are also available).

Similarly, the team of the Seemannsmission in Cuxhaven, Germany, shared: “Instead of visiting you on your ship in the Port of Cuxhaven without announcement, we will visit you on board only if you invite us. So, if you need phonecards, information, newspapers, counselling, or anything else, please contact us and we will visit you. Also, if you are not allowed to go shopping due to work or other reasons, feel free to contact us. In this case we will try to get the things you need from the shop.”

At the Mission to Seafarers in Townsville, Australia, the local team brings a small selection of goods for sale on a fold-up table near the gangway of certain ships. If a seafarer would like to purchase, he can approach and pay.

In some ports, seafarers’ ministries will run errands for seafarers who cannot have shore leave. Rev. Simon Ro, The Mission to Seafarers port chaplain in Yokohama, Japan, shared that he is “buying things from the city and bringing it back to seafarers on board ships. We received an email from the captain of a ship in port who asked us to buy some cup noodles for him and his crew, as they were not allowed to go ashore due to restrictions. On March 23rd, we were able to buy the noodles and deliver it to the ship. The captain and his crew were thankful that we were able to meet this need.”

Ministry from a distance

Besides gangway visits, many seafarers’ centres are creating care packages for crew that can be delivered with the help of harbour masters, port pilots, and shipping agents. On the Tyne River in the UK, Stella Maris chaplain Paul Atkinson has created care packages to share with seafarers to show care and support. Atkinson said: “These packages contain religious items such as palm crosses, prayer cards, prayer books, rosaries etc. as well as toiletries, chocolate and sweets, our monthly Stella Maris Magazine, and other small appropriate items.”

Similarly, The Mission to Seafarers in Gladstone, Australia has pulled together almost 300 care packages for crews visiting in the next weeks. They shared: “The first of our welfare boxes was delivered to a vessel berthed in Gladstone today. This has been a major collaboration of so many local businesses, industry players, union, state and federal government departments, volunteers, and staff.”

Most seafarers’ ministries have taken to the internet to try to connect with seafarers. The first thing for most ministries is simply to update their websites and social media pages to reflect the services they can continue to share. The head office of the Deutsche Seemannsmission shared a comprehensive list of services that are being offered at all its affiliated ministries. Similarly, the Fishermen’s Mission put together a list of resources to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 for the fishing industry.

Many chaplains have a long list of seafarer names in their digital rolodex that they are
contacting to share a word of encouragement or to catch up on news. Most have made their contact details available so that seafarers can chat if they wish by text or voice. Some chaplaincies have even come up with new technologies for reaching out: the Danish Seamen’s Church launched a new chaplain chat website, available principally for Danish-speaking seafarers, and the Mariner’s Club in Hong Kong launched a new seafarers app that helps visiting seafarers get up-to-date information on the services that can be provided.

Coming together in faith

Special prayer and religious messages are also being shared by port chaplains online. The North American Maritime Ministry Association is offering a 15-minute time of prayer for its members every Tuesday and Friday for the month of April. In the Netherlands, Rev. Pascal Handschin and Rev. Stefan Francke, both affiliated to the Nederlandse Zeevarendencentrale, have started a similar-length series of video recorded sermons and prayers from the chapel of The Mission to Seafarers in Vlissingen.

Ministries around the world are adapting to find possibilities for ministry faced with the coronavirus challenge. These new methods require close attention to health guidance on social distancing, but also demonstrate tremendous dedication in finding opportunities to serve those who might need it most.
News from the IMO - March 2020

BY CAPTAIN PADDY MCKNIGHT

Much has happened at the IMO since my last report in December of last year, and since then, there have been a number of Sub-Committee meetings in the interim, notably the seventh of each of:

- Navigation, Communications, and Search and Rescue (NCSR);
- Ship Design and Construction (SDC);
- Pollution Prevention and Response (PPR); and,
- Ship Systems and Equipment (SSE).

All four of these meetings have been reported in a fair amount of detail and are available on the InterManager website should any readers of this short article have missed them and wish to catch up.

At this juncture, I can normally look ahead and alert you as to what will be discussed during the meetings of various Sub-Committees and Committees planned for the coming months. However, with the advent of the COVID-19 on the world stage causing a rapid increase of cases worldwide, plus continuing difficulties for some delegates from IMO Member States travelling from abroad to attend IMO meetings, postponements were made to imminent meetings as a matter of necessity, until further notice:

1. The Legal Committee, LEG 107, scheduled to meet from 18 - 20 March 2020;
2. The Editorial & Technical (E&T) Group 33(IMSBC), scheduled to take place from 23 - 27 March 2020;
3. ISWG-GHG 7, scheduled to take place from 23 - 27 March 2020; and,
4. The Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC 75), scheduled to take place from 30 March - 3 April.

Rescheduling of the meetings listed above will be announced in good time for delegates to make appropriate arrangements, and the IMO Secretariat will provide further updates concerning other meetings due to take place in April.

In this regard, the only Committee scheduled to meet in April is that of Facilitation (FAL 44) from 20 - 24, while the Maritime Safety Committee (MSC 102) is planned to sit from 13 - 22 May.

The IMOHQ building was closed to visitors and staff from 12 - 16 March following the 11 March assessment by the World Health Organisation (WHO) that COVID-19 be characterised as a pandemic.

In addition, information was received that one of the short-term conference interpreters who had been working in the building on 4 March 2020 – and who did not at that stage display any COVID-19 symptoms – was later diagnosed with the virus.

As a result of this information and in accordance with Host Government recommended procedures, certain areas of the IMOHQ buildings underwent a deep cleaning procedure during the closure period, and the remainder of the building was sanitised as appropriate.

Finally, group visits and other external events in the IMOHQ building were cancelled through to 15 April, inclusive and from 17 March onwards, and social visits, luncheons etc. were actively discouraged: delegates wishing to meet with Secretariat staff were encouraged to consider whether the meeting goals might be accomplished by other means of communication such as telephone, e-mail, teleconference, etc.

Should there be any future dramatic developments concerning IMO prior to my next report in a few months’ time, I will endeavour to keep you all informed via the Secretary General’s weekly Dispatches.
2020 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea: Call for nominations

For the attention of intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations in consultative status with IMO

We are kindly requesting the cooperation of both intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations to promote and encourage the submission of nominations for the 2020 IMO Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea.

Attached is a promotional flyer in the three working languages of the Organisation (English, French and Spanish). They each contain two links: one includes the nomination guidelines (Circular Letter No.4134), and the other consists of a Word document of the nomination form. You may remember that the Award Guidelines were amended in 2018 and nominations may now also include displays of exceptional seamanship skills in challenging conditions or any other acts of outstanding courage occurring at sea.

We would be most grateful if you could promote the flyer on your website and/or circulate it to your members as you consider appropriate. Alternatively, it can be accessed through the following links:

English: https://indd.adobe.com/view/acc76365-70a6-45bd-9614-efb41ac1f71e
French: https://indd.adobe.com/view/af176159-5883-455f-889c-12950ee9a2e1
Spanish: https://indd.adobe.com/view/4b34d148-b04d-4fcf-9605-9b3e2fb618a2

We truly appreciate any support you can provide by promoting the nomination of deserving candidates for this prestigious award. As always, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any queries.

Many thanks and kind regards,
External Relations Office
Letter from Gerardo

Gerardo A. Borromeo is the Vice-Chairman of Philippine Transmarine Carriers, Inc. Since its beginnings in 1979, PTC has emerged beyond crew management to offer an integrated value chain of services which includes shipping, aviation, and international professional placement among others.

The below letter highlights the challenges faced by seafarers both on board and ashore, from repatriation to controlling on board situations amid the COVID-19 outbreak, and the amazing lengths our industry has gone to to ensure it’s business as usual.

*Good morning Kuba. Good to know and thank you for the continuing interest in helping the Philippines. Indeed, Philippine Airlines has been on top of our list.

Karen has been working closely with PAL as she offers our Principals and partners
either PAL commercial flights (until PAL suspended their services) or PAL air charter arrangements out of London, JFK, LAX, and SFO. As an aside, PAL’s Inflight Kitchen has been preparing the meals we are providing our repatriated seafarers, whom we are housing until they can make it home to their respective provinces. By tomorrow, we will have over 1,500 on the ground in Manila: we are now working on the next 12,000.

The biggest challenge – at least for the maritime side (cruise industry) – was to grapple with controlling the situation on board, ensuring stability of health (including isolation or quarantine if needed), getting to port, and connecting with the airlines: a very complex and complicated activity. But 14 days out, and – in some cases – nearing 30 days out (for some cruise vessels) since the cruise industry was hit, we can see the beginning of accelerated movement towards preparing crew to come home.

On the other hand, the timing lag has, in many ways, allowed the 'quarantine' period on board to help sort out any health issues. On the Philippine side, we have managed to push the envelope in getting the government to address and adjust its policies to help facilitate the movement of seafarers back home.

Our team has been working closely with the Department of Health, Department of Interior and Local Governments, and the Department of Foreign Affairs, trying to ease the burden of red tape without compromising safety and security, all while hand holding our Principals who saw very dark days in the challenges faced in repatriating the seafarers in the face of so many restrictions.

We have also had the benefit of having MGen Padilla (who joined us over a year ago, having retired as Deputy Chief of Staff of our Armed Forces) in charge of Planning, and he heads our efforts at Corporate Public Policy and Risk Management. He has been invited by the Department of Defence to be part of the Inter Agency Task Force which is in charge of managing the situation during the enhanced community quarantine (lockdown period) we have been placed in. When you have a General as part of your team (even if they are retired) eyes and ears perk up, listen and act, especially when they speak and address the government.

The past ten days for us were some of the most anxious and frustrating times we have ever been through as a team – certainly for me personally: we were really taxed to the max if I am allowed to say that. I could see how fatigue started to set in and where this started to take its toll on each person. I am grateful to each of them, for they held through and now slowly we are seeing the benefits of the dogged determination of the past days resulting in the benefit for our seafarers – all seafarers, not just that of PTC or Jebsen PTC.

We have been blessed to have such committed individuals working 24/7 during this crisis, where patience is the most valuable commodity that anyone can have.

This crisis, which has caught the world unprepared, will drive many to revisit their business continuity plans. That was the effort led by MGen Padilla in the last year for our Group, and even so, we still find many gaps. This is because BCM efforts require a well-oiled machine to involve the private sector, governments, and multilateral agencies: the whole of society at the end of the
day. Such planning and running of table top exercises to anticipate bottlenecks was lacking.

One thing that has become so evident is how human behaviour reacts at a time of crisis such as this, where we see individuals and communities driven by fear, frustration, and the lack of accurate information. We are lucky that despite such challenges, we have not totally lost our humanity, and we have been going all out to protect the interests of our global maritime professionals and our seafarers, who literally move the world through their work.

And in this, I thank you for your concern, and the continuing show of help to the maritime community, globally, and to the Philippines in particular.

There will be lessons learned in all this, and a new normal will be established in how we behave and act, and how governments will look at the movement of people in particular.

I remain confident that we will find our way through and come out of this better and stronger.

Gerardo A. Borromeo
Vice-Chairman
Chief Executive Officer
Philippine Transmarine Carriers, Inc.
Seafarers and dock workers are still dying while working in enclosed spaces onboard vessels because there is not enough understanding throughout the shipping industry of the risks faced by today’s seafarers.
Dangerous timeframes are imposed for hazardous tasks, and safety improvements do not happen because shipping industry investigations encourage a ‘blame culture’ – according to ship management trade association InterManager, which has revealed the findings of its comprehensive industry survey into the problems of enclosed spaces.

A broad range of vessel operators, managers, and crew took part in the three-month-long industry-wide survey, with crew from almost 250 ships providing feedback and representing more than 5,000 seafarers.

Key concerns included a perceived lack of improvement in the design of vessels, with not enough consideration being given to access areas and the people working in them. As well as being hard to reach, enclosed spaces are frequently impossible to properly ventilate or to measure the atmosphere in, the respondents said.

Unrealistically tight timeframes for cargo hold and tank preparation were likened to “bullying on an industrial scale” with seafarers calling on ship managers to shield them from unrealistic commercial time pressures.

Seafarers asked for prioritisation of management-led safety cultures and suggested using the “fear factor” to raise awareness of the dangers of working in enclosed spaces. In fact, respondents recommended changing the phrase to “dangerous space” or even “fatal space” to hit the message home.

In addition, the survey revealed a wide-spread belief that a blame culture is deeply rooted within the shipping industry. Respondents felt that the majority of accident investigations stop at finding the ‘guilty party’ and very rarely go further to discover why the accident occurred or what were the reasons for the actions of those killed or injured.

The survey revealed a feeling that accident investigation results are inconsistent, indicating that the absence of a standard investigation format prevents a proper and thorough analysis of accidents and the ready identification of potential improvements.

In addition to outlining the problems, the survey asked recipients to identify potential solutions to avoid further deaths. Responding seafarers called for clearer identification of hazardous spaces, suggesting access should be restricted by senior management onboard or ashore.

A need was identified for additional training to address the lack of awareness and instil safe practices, while some seafarers said they would prefer only to access enclosed spaces while using safety equipment such as Emergency Escape Breathing Devices (EEBDs) or Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCABs): some respondents believed that technology should be used to help with limiting the requirement for human access in enclosed spaces.

Focusing on vessel design, recipients advised that future new builds should avoid areas of enclosed space or restrict them to a minimum. In addition, any enclosed spaces should include provisions for adequate ventilation (whole space) and adequate fixed gas detection systems, as well as accessibility for humans in order to perform search and rescue operations.

Captain Kuba Szymanski, said: “It is clear that much still needs to be done to address the issues of working in enclosed spaces and
to eradicate the risk to life. No-one should die while carrying out their daily work.

“Seafarers seem to believe that this unsafe environment is created by designers and enforced by manuals and procedures, and therefore cannot be disputed, even if it results in death.”

Many seafarers responding to the InterManager survey expressed dismay at the situation. Capt. Szymanski commented: “It is rather sad to see so many seafarers losing hope that their situation will never improve. As a result, the suggestions from those individuals do not stretch beyond improving training and procedures.”

Encouraging ship managers to take the lead on safety, Capt Szymanski remarked:

“When I examined the results of the survey, I noticed that the most positive responses came from within companies where senior managers took a leading role on safety matters, where they engaged themselves and led from the front. I would especially like to thank those individuals because it is they who are creating the company safety culture.”

Since the results of InterManager’s survey have been published, Human Element International Group created a subcommittee called Enclosed Space Committee, which InterManager is chairing.

InterManager carried out a survey and identified the below major concerns:
Committee Goals and Objectives are:

To reduce or even eradicate fatalities resulting from Enclosed Space Entry.

Our Strategy:

Control of enclosed space entry has traditionally been dependent on procedural means supported by monitoring testing and breathing apparatus, particularly in the case of emergencies.

A broader approach that uses the ‘hierarchy of controls may be of value’. The figure below shows an outline strategy:

Committee Deliverables:

Specific deliverables to be created following delivery of Phase 1 but may include:

1. Revised standards for access and ventilation of enclosed spaces.
2. Revisions of processes for cleaning and ventilation.
3. Revision on requirement leading to enclosed space entry.

It is hoped that results of Enclosed Space Committee work will be available in the middle of 2020.
Fellow organisation Intertanko has started an initiative to push for better protection of the Gulf of Guinea area. They have asked to send the attached letter on company letter headed documents to the flag states we have DOC with.

We need to push for improvements in the area from all angles, as we do not want to repeat the recent Maersk Tema and MSC Talia experience. Changes in the GoG can only be achieved if the international community is demanding significant improvements. Individual companies do not have the necessary weight, so we need to chip in with the rest of the industry and demand active involvement of the flag states and the international regulatory bodies.

Please use the attached template and send the signed letter via email to the CEO of the flag states you have DOC with. When you do, please also include the Intertanko Security team in your message (security@intertanko.com).
[Name Head/ CEO of Flag State]          [Date]
[Address]                  Our Ref.: XXXXXXXXXXX

Re: Gulf of Guinea Security

To [Name Head/ CEO of Flag State]

As a [ship owner] [ship manager] with vessels entered with [Flag], we write to you highlighting our concerns about the safety and security of our seafarers operating within the Gulf Of Guinea and environs. As you will be aware, recent cases of vessel-capture and hostage-taking continue to escalate. This is of great concern, particularly following the recent death of a captured seafarer.

As a responsible [ship owner] [ship manager], we formally request your proactive stance within the IMO, ILO, and any other forum within which you represent the interests of seafarers. We need to ensure that the maritime industry and its regulators bring to bear every possible political influence to effect necessary, urgent change. We acknowledge the varied and complex nature of the political landscape operating in and around the Gulf of Guinea; however, the right to ply our trade is enshrined within the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. It is against this longstanding international treaty that we appeal for your intervention, visible leadership, and commitment to ensure the rights of seafarers to safe and secure passage are upheld and protected globally, and more specifically within the Gulf of Guinea region.

In the recent past, the maritime industry and our regulators have demonstrated an ability to work together, developing comprehensive solutions to significant security threats, notably off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden. The seriousness of the Gulf of Guinea situation now resembles that of the coast of Somalia in the mid-2000s and will require significant pressure from all sectors, and most importantly political will and ambition, to develop land-based solutions. Simply encouraging further coping mechanisms and hardening on board vessels is no longer enough.

As an individual company, we are committed to working with our representative maritime NGOs and regional/national shipowner associations to apply pressure through all means to bring awareness and urgent, solution-oriented actions to bear.

We would appreciate your response outlining your intentions regarding this urgent security threat.

Yours sincerely,
[Signature]
ICS ITF Facilitation letter for shipping companies manning agents

The International Chamber of Shipping and the International Transport Workers Federation have issued the below letter draft to encourage state representatives and relevant authorities to recognise the needs of the global shipping industry. With a multinational workforce, the letter seeks to encourage the support of the evolving changes worldwide and to enable ships and their crew to continue to operate, as well as to sanction the swift embarkation, disembarkation, and repatriation of seafarers and crew members.

[Company headed notepaper]  

To Whom this might concern

Dear Sir/ Madam,

CERTIFICATE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT WORKER – SEAFarer

I am writing for your assistance in ensuring that we can continue to supply the goods on which we all rely in our everyday lives, and that you will allow the seafarer whose details are set out below to transit between their home country and their ship and vice versa.

In these unprecedented circumstances, it is imperative to ensure that the flow of essential goods, energy, food, medicines, and many other products is not disrupted by measures impeding the safe and efficient movement of ships and the seafarers who operate them. Therefore, the United Nations bodies, namely the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), along with the European Commission, have stated that seafarers should be officially recognised as key workers and granted exemptions from travel restrictions so they can join and leave their ships and return home without impediment while complying with infection control.

State representatives and relevant authorities need to recognise the need of the highly globalised shipping industry, with its multinational workforce, to smoothly undertake crew changes around the world, to enable ships to continue to operate and to enable the swift embarkation, disembarkation, and repatriation of crew members.

This letter certifies that this seafarer should be allowed free passage to travel between their home and their vessel and has participated in a medical screening.

[Date]
Seafarer’s Name ____________________________
Date of Birth ____________________________
Passport Number ____________________________
Seaman’s Book Number (if applicable) ____________________________
Seafarer’s Identity Document Number (if applicable) ____________________________
Position on board ship ____________________________
Company Name ____________________________
Ship Name ____________________________
Ship IMO Number ____________________________
Is joining the ship in (name of port) (as applicable) ____________________________
Is leaving the ship in (name of port) (as applicable) ____________________________

Yours faithfully,

Name _____________________________________________
Company _____________________________________________
Position _____________________________________________

This letter is supported by:

International Chamber of Shipping
International Transport Workers Federation

1This document is a modified copy of Annex 3 of the Communication of the European Commission of 23rd March 2020 on the implementation of the Green Lanes under the Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and to ensure the availability of goods and essential services:
MESSAGE FROM OUR MEMBERS

The Art of Maritime Manning

BY DR. BINAY SINGH

Dr. Binay Singh is the Founder and Chief Executive of Singh Marine Ltd., and author of The Art of Maritime Manning. A must read for those wanting to get into the maritime crewing business, Dr. Singh’s book guides readers through every variation of the highs and lows of maritime manning, sharing his experiences and advice to benefit entrepreneurs embarking on this challenging, yet rewarding, journey.
“Transparency creates trust, and trust creates an environment in which people are more likely to be honest, share ideas and knowledge, and collaborate towards common goals.”

-Dr. Binay Singh

Ships cannot run on fuel or new and sophisticated equipment alone; they should be operated by a sufficient number of adequately trained, qualified, and experienced seafarers, and be appropriately manned to reach a destination. Dr. Singh, the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Singh Marine Management Ltd., shares his journey in building his own successful company, which is a champion of marine Human Resources: he is a great motivator who has combined his expertise and heart to establish his manning company.

Building a manning business requires the basic settings, in the same way that planting a tree envisions the bearing of fruit: it should have a solid foundation, established by a well-learned and strong root.

The success of the business starts with you, the business owner. You should learn to identify what you want to achieve and set yourself a goal. Your goal should also be definite and well planned as to how you plan to accomplish it: perfect timing and learning when to achieve your goal is key.

Manning businesses require massive actions, which must be thought-out properly. Dr. Singh has successfully learned and mastered the basics in the industry, which has brought him recognition on his venture, by not only helping others to become prosperous, but also by giving people a positive outlook on life. He enables people to learn through motivation, and inspires them through the success of his work. Not only does this give him the knowledge of running a flourishing manning business, but it has provided him a brighter outlook of who he is as a person.

Running a manning business and remaining motivated is not as easy as one, two, three, but Dr. Singh has proved through his own personal journey that nothing is impossible to someone who is passionate, driven, and willing to make their dream a reality. Determination and learning the basics are the best starting point in reaching a set goal.

The Book is available here: https://we.tl/t-f9oYUn0uZN
On the Wire  

New cadet program is set to boost cadet berths at sea

intermanager.org

It is with an extremely heavy heart that we have made the difficult decision to CANCEL our conference in Limassol on 12th March 2020.

In the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, we have received information that there is universal advice in Cyprus to avoid large gatherings, and in order to lead by example, we are cancelling the event.

We appreciate that this is late notice, especially for those who have already made plans to travel to Cyprus, but the health and safety of our members has always been our utmost priority.

We are sorry for any inconvenience caused.

Managing Your Mental Health During the Covid 19 ... Dr Kate Thompson, a counselling psychologist, provides information and guidance for seafarers affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
Get in touch

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