

Up close and personal

Cyber networking is gaining a presence in shipping circles but there's still nothing better than mixing business with pleasure and pressing the flesh

The Hong Kong Shipowners' Association, the Hong Kong Liner Shipping Association, the Hong Kong Container Terminal Association and other esteemed industry bodies in the territory, have done much to further the business interests of their members. But all work and no play ever made a seafarer a dull boy, and the same would apply to the landlubbers involved in shipping and the related industries.

Many people in Hong Kong's maritime sector have a work hard play hard mentality and the organizations, both formal and informal, that have been established for the sector recognize this fact.

A HONG KONG INSTITUTION

The HKSOA has a long tradition of inviting top calibre guest speakers from around the world to its monthly lunches, held in some of Hong Kong's top hotels. In 2011, the HKSOA hosted such shipping luminaries as past head of Clarkson Research, Dr Martin Stopford, director of Marine in Hong Kong Francis Liu, Hong Kong's secretary for Transport & Housing Professor Anthony Cheung, Bing Leung. Less formal but perhaps more precious as networking opportunities are the occasional well-attended cocktail parties held through the year.

FOR THE YOUNG AT HEART

The Young People in Shipping Network is, as you might imagine, a less formal arrangement than the HKSOA. Established in 2010, YPSN now boasts more than 500 members.

Three young women in the maritime profession, Tabitha Logan, Marija Pospilis and Su Yin Anand, founded YPSN. What started out as an excuse for informal drinks soon blossomed in to a fully-fledged institution that holds regular events, often attracting star acts such the appearance of the world's most renowned shipping journalist Michael Gray. Mr Grey flew from London



Founder members of The Young People in Shipping Network Tabitha Logan, Marija Pospilis and Su Yin Anand

at the behest of YPSN at the Maritime China event held in Hong Kong in March 2012.

YPSN also has an active online forum that among other things highlights job opportunities in Hong Kong.

Explaining why the trio thought a platform such as YPSN was needed, Ms Logan said recently, that the more established members of the territory's maritime sector had already built up their own networks but there was a lack of similar communities for new arrivals to Hong Kong and the shipping business.

It should be noted that, despite the name of the organization, the older members of Hong Kong's Maritime network are not expressly excluded, as long as you can keep up.

A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE WISTA

Also not as exclusive as it may sound is the Women in Shipping and Trading Association. Established in Hong Kong in 2009, WISTA Hong Kong has gone from strength to strength. WISTA is a global organization

and the latest news is that China is likely to host its 2014 annual conference.

The Hong Kong Sea Transport and Logistics Association was primarily set up as a common platform for dialogue among liner companies, freight forwarders and logistics companies but considers its luncheon/networking and happy hour gatherings as vital opportunities for its members from the three main disciplines to mix and exchange information in an informal setting.

In Hong Kong the "catch them young" approach is adopted: no more so than at Adventure Ship, a non-governmental organization that aims to provide educational and recreational training at sea for Hong Kong's youth. AS recruits up to 9,000 young people each year with special allocations for over nines that have physical or mental disabilities, children with behavioural challenges, chronic illnesses or are underprivileged.

In addition to the abundance of meet and greet opportunities offered by Hong Kong's maritime organizations the territory hosts many conferences and exhibitions organized by international maritime event promoters. 🏠