

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Open Days: We are continuing our open Sundays thanks to the Port of Albany, and our loyal volunteers who staff the tour guide positions and the parking lot. The only problem is that rain on Sundays is beginning to be a SLATER tradition. But, as the old Chief was overheard telling a visiting family, "If you really want to know what it was like for the sailors who sailed these ships, then you come on a rainy day." The tour now includes the wardroom, pilothouse and galley, so we are getting some interior spaces open. Tickets are \$4.00 for adults, \$3.00 for senior citizens and \$2.00 for children 6-12. All tickets sold will be honoured for one year following the date of purchase for a return visit. This "Bounce back" ticket will allow visitors to see the progress we are making aboard SLATER.

Work Days: We have expanded our work days aboard the ship to Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays. The work hours are from 6-4. Sunday is our open day to the public. When we move to the Snow Dock we anticipate doing our loud heavy maintenance on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. We will be open to the public Thursdays through Sundays.

Shipboard Progress: **Tom Beeler** and **Hack Charbonneau** completed the modifications to the mast. This involved cutting off the large platform at the yardarm level that was added in the seventies, and cutting away the lower platform so that eventually the FMC bullhorn speaker box can be mounted there. This work involved cutting and lowering about a half ton of steel off the mast, without the use of a crane. They also rigged and welded a ladder from the yardarm to the truck, so we will be able to climb up there to service the SA antenna. The only mistake we made was putting the 400 lb. of aluminium in the scrap metal dumpster with the steel. The aluminium was gone the next morning. At forty-five cents a pound, the coffee fund took a real hit.

When **Hack and Tom** came down off the mast, they went to work on the flagbags. They cut both flagbags loose from the bridge and dropped them to the 01 level. There it's much easier to needlegun, paint and make the needed repairs to the bags. The deck force has them just about finished. We had so much rain the deck force had to find a sheltered project. That turned out to be the underside of gun tub 24, amidships. Working off the ladders, reaching up overhead with the rust raining down was a bear of a job, but it's finished. They have also made a lot of progress on the 20mm amidships ready service lockers and the side of the bridge. The forward superstructure is our last real major eyesore. We will have it done by the time we move.

The SA air search radar antenna has been reportedly repaired and is rotating in **Hal Hatfield's** shop, so that's ready to go aboard. No word as to whether Hal has been tracking any "bogies" with it. **Mike Mason** is almost finished with the repairs to three watertight doors. Actually, they have fabricated brand new ones, and they look great.

Roger Oesterreich has taken over the galley in addition to the pilothouse, and both spaces are really starting to shine. These are the high points of the tour. **Roy Gunther** has taken charge in the wardroom pantry. He remounted the refrigerator door, repaired and repainted the drawers, put a faucet on the sink, and gave the space a good cleaning. He is now fabricating a dishrack for the bulkhead.

Gordon Lattey has taken over the radio room as a project and begun the cleaning and ripout of the post war equipment. He and his "Sawzall" make a very effective team. Together they cut out both URC-32 transmitters. We moved the TDE and TAJ transmitters into the radio room to get them out of the weather. Did you know that the "little" TDE weighs more than the larger TAJ? Size can be deceptive.

The "Three Fuses," **Barry Witte, Gary Sheedy** and **Larry Williams** have moved on the ventilation systems. The main supply and exhaust fans forward and aft have been reactivated, as well as several smaller fans. There was a heavy fog on the fantail when they started the exhaust fan aft for the first time. A little dust is an understatement. We have a new heater on the messdecks that we've never wired up. Every Saturday we defer the job because we know summer is just around the corner. Every Sunday, the wet, cold, damp tour guides huddle around the coffee pot wishing the heater was working. We may wire it up just to see if it will stop the rain on Sundays.

Tony Dude's engineers are continuing work on the emergency diesel generator. This month they cleaned out the fuel system and the day tank. The work continues to be four weeks to a test start.

Help from the County: County Commissioner **Mike Breslin** and **Dan Hornick** called with an offer to let the county's welder do some work aboard SLATER. They are also working to arrange to get us some help through the Work Release Program. We are moving forward with both these efforts.

The Sea Cadets helped out this month by manning a promotional booth at the Washington Park festival, moving the new nylon mooring lines aboard the ship and cleaning the messdecks. We gave each cadet nine squares of tile to clean. The cadet with the best looking nine squares got to pick out a prize from the gift shop. The place looks a great deal better due to their effort.

The Snow Dock bollards are complete, and the water line is in. **Hal Hatfield** pulled in his friend **Kevin Haggerty** of Flex Electric to help us with the electrical installation at the Snow Dock. The planning for that is well underway. However, it looks like it will be the first of July before we get to our permanent home. **Marty Davis** is working on the donated barge from **Eckloff Marine**. We also have feelers out for a loaned barge so we can be at our permanent home for the summer.

Michele Vennard has volunteered to take over the ship's store operation. We cleaned out the old ship's store and moved in the stock, and gave her a place to call her own. She and **Sam Saylor** are working on restocking thanks to brisk sales on Sundays.

Speaking of off ship activities, Gordon Lattey and **Libby Post** came up with a great looking membership brochure for the foundation. Our volunteer of the month would have to be **Annette Beauchaine**, for all the work she's done calling volunteers to staff the ship on Sundays with tour guides.

And finally, without fanfare or ceremony, we held a change of command. **Barbara Higbee** relinquished command of the Albany SLATER Steering Committee to **Frank Lasch**. Frank is a semi-retired attorney and former lobbyist, and an Albany native who knows everybody. Frank also happened to be a destroyer officer who served on **ROBERT L. WILSON** and was a plankowner on **PARSONS**. He brings to us a wealth of knowledge and contacts. Poor Barb didn't even get the commission pennant when she went ashore. She was last seen skipping down the gangway saying "Thank god for Frank Lasch." Actually, she remains on the board and will be as involved as ever. We thank her for all the good work in getting us underway.

We continue to prove that if you treat your volunteers badly enough, they will solve all your problems for you. **Bob Calendar** got so tired of pouring weak coffee back over the grounds that he bought us a new thirty cup coffee pot, and a box of cups to go with it. The pot was mistakenly called a "Party Perk", unless they mean a work party.

We still need you on Sundays! This is almost a repeat of last month. We can't express enough thanks to all the volunteers who have continued to help us on Sundays. With ten guides stationed on the ship, ticket sellers, the souvenir table, parking and pier security, it takes twenty people to man the operation on open days. Our volunteer tour guide staff has been trained, but we can always use more volunteers. **Nancy Buxton**, our educational coordinator continues to hold training sessions every Saturday at 3PM or 1500. If you enjoy working with people, and would like to train for our tour guide program, please contact us by calling guide coordinator Annette **Beauchaine** at 518-465-2856. The *Tour Guide Training Manual* is available for distribution. We can work you into our rotation weekly, bi-weekly or monthly as you are available. There are also slots available that don't require shipboard training such as security, in the parking lot and at the sales desk. **Nancy and Annette** are working on a new form that will bring more order to the signing-up process and cut down on all those phone calls.

Note from Nancy: I want to thank **Roy Gunther** and all the other guides who are helping to increase my nautical knowledge. It's been at least two weeks since I called the SLATER a boat and I no longer refer to the 01 level as upstairs.

The phrase of the month: The most repeated phrase I've heard is when women come down to the messdecks. They all say the same thing. "Oh darn, I meant to bake something for the volunteers, and I forgot." **Claire Oesterreich's** brownies continue to make other homemakers feel guilty and inadequate. Women who haven't baked in years are suddenly shopping for cake mixes. To continue along this track in the nineties would definitely be considered sexist, so I'll quit while my own wife is still speaking to me.

Feeling left out? This newsletter mentions only about a third of the people helping us, a real indication of the activity level down here. There is a lot going on and it's a great group of people to be working with. So if you haven't gotten involved, think about it. **We hope to see you aboard.**