



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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The chow line forms at the annual lasagna dinner.

On Saturday September 27<sup>th</sup>, we held our annual volunteer appreciation dinner aboard the SLATER. Once again, our Polish chef **Stan Murawski** took the time to prepare several trays of his special lasagna for his shipmates. Volunteers and spouses all crowded into the messdecks to celebrate the SLATER's eleventh year in Albany. We were joined by the Fall Field Week crew, most of whom arrived in town a day early to partake in the dinner.

This year, **Michigan Dick Walker** took the lead in organizing the Field Week, and he did a great job. His first and biggest challenge was finding a cook. This was the first time in years that no regular cook was available to accompany the crew. For a while it was looking like cold cereal, peanut butter sandwiches and a few more trips to McDonald's. Then a savior came in the form of **Chief Bernie "Smitty" Smith**, our regular Monday cook. He agreed to cook for the crew all week, as long as he could get help for clean up. With that offer, Coastie **Larry Stiles** stepped forward to volunteer as messcook, and the rest of the crew rotated through one meal each.

The rest of the crew fell into their rates. Walker took **Gary Headworth** up to the flying bridge, where they spent

the week working in the main battery director tub cleaning up the control and communications gear mounted to the tub. Gary Headworth spent a lot of time doing Headworth-type things like drilling and tapping.

**Another Firecontrolman, Mike Marko, went to work on the MK-51 director for the aft twin forty.** During the filming of "Orion in Midsummer" we found that all three MK-51 directors were frozen in train and elevation due to lack of use. Mike tore down the director, found the problem was frozen synchros and bearings, freed it and reassembled the unit. Throughout the process he was assisted by electrician's mate **Butch Warrender** and **Dick Walker**. They said something resembling beach sand kept falling out of the bearings. They did a lot of preservation work in the process. Marko had enough time left over that he began the process of freeing the starboard director for gun 41.



**Mike Marko working on the MK-51 Director.**



**Three generations of Parkers, Jim, Zac and Joe threading pipe for the forward head.**

**Welder Laird Confer had plenty of work.** Larry Stiles's son **Mike Stiles** signed up to be Laird's striker, and together they did a bunch of welding work in support of the crew in the forward head and then completed welding down the starboard quarter chock that **Bill Siebert** and **Bill Houghton** had started. **John Yocum, Ron Prest,** and **Ron Mazure** spent the week on the portside 40mm gun. With the help of regulars **Chris Fedden, Don Miller** and **Earl Herchenroder**, they completed chipping it down to bare metal, sanded it, corrosealed and primed it. Not a bad week's work. Being the youngest and most agile (remember that those descriptions are relative for this group), **Ron Prest** also drew the job of scaling, cleaning and priming the portside B-3 fan room, a rather close space that not many of the crew can fit in, let alone work in.



**Chief Smith kept the crew well fed.**



**The messdecks chow line.**

**Finally, the Parker Clan was there in force. Plumber Jim Parker** and senior clan member spent the week in the forward head, plumbing in and making connections for the fresh water and sewer lines. He connected the sewer line that the HUSE crew had run in the spring and ran the vent line overboard. He completed all the connections to the hot water tank below. He was assisted by his son Joe Parker and grandson Zac Parker. Jim also fixed a leaky fuel line on our heating boiler. Young Zac got quite an education working with the old guys all week. He was all over the place helping every one and even worked in the galley. Joe also brought a special Nikon camera with a 185 degree I-pix lens and began working on a virtual tour of the ship. All in all the crew had a very productive and enjoyable week



**Ron Prest scaling the port forty.**



**Ron Mazure cleaning up the elevation drive.**

**On October 13<sup>th</sup> the USS SLATER crew celebrated the Navy Birthday and Columbus Day with a ceremony sponsored by the Capital District Chief Petty Officers Association.** Normally, the USS SLATER is closed on Monday and Tuesday for continuing restoration, but exceptions are made for significant holidays. A lot of people took advantage of the day off and the weather to visit.



**Gus Negus and Mike Dingmon proudly showing off B-4.**



**Joe Parker bending pipe.**

The Day was made extra special as the Chiefs Association made two special presentations. They honored our retiring **Congressman Mike McNulty** for his years of public service. The Congressman gave a speech about the tearing down of the Berlin Wall and the special esteem the East Berliners held for the US Military, who they said ultimately made the reunification of their city and their country possible. He also told about the early appearance of capitalism in East Berlin, as East Berliners were selling pieces of the wall as souvenirs and renting hammers and chisels to those who needed the tools to get their own souvenirs.



**The Navy Birthday aboard the SLATER.**

As part of the program the Chiefs announced their selection of the **USS SLATER volunteer of the year**. This year they chose **Rocky Rockwood** for his years of dedicated service restoring and maintaining the SLATER's motor whaleboat. Over the years Rocky has put in thousands of hours lovingly caring for this gem of the museum collection. There are few people left who have the knowledge and patience to care for a wooden boat the way Rocky has. We were the beneficiaries of all the skills he garnered working around wooden boats on the Maine

coast. Most of his time working has gone unnoticed by the crew as the majority of his work was done in solitude at Scarano's Boatyard, but the results of his work are magnificent. The CPOs felt he deserved to be honored for his efforts. Following the ceremony, the dignitaries and guests were invited to a buffet luncheon put on by Bernie Smith and his fellow CPOs down on the messdecks. A special Navy Birthday cake was cut with a Navy Officer's sword by Congressman McNulty and his family.



**Rocky's wife Pat congratulates him on being named CPOA "Volunteer of the Year".**

The crew continues "Maintaining as before." It has been an especially good month for the engineers. **Gus Negus, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon and Karl Herchenroder** have made a great deal of progress with the eight cylinder ship's service generator set in the aft engineroom, B-3. They actually fired up the engine for a twenty minute test run this month. Getting ready for the test involved replacing many leaking gaskets. They pulled the fresh water pump and repaired it. They had to tighten the fuel oil pump packing gland. Several leaks in the air manifold were repaired and they added a drain line. They removed the lube oil strainer assembly for cleaning and then

reassembled it. Last year they had completely replaced the starting air compressor in B-1 with a rebuilt unit. The starting air system in B-3 had been previously hydro tested by **Larry LaChance**. However, when they first attempted to build 600 pounds, some non-original piping that connected the starting air

compressor to the ships service air let go, and that had to be rebuilt. Once repaired, the starting air system worked fine. The only incident during the test run was the County Sheriff's boat that pulled up alongside to check on all the smoke coming out of the stack. After the initial cloud, the engine ran with virtually no smoke. After the test run they found some minor leaks that were repaired. They also repaired the pyrometer wiring. They are now in the process of winterizing the engine with antifreeze. Then it's all on the electricians to reinstall the generator brushes and clean and calibrate the after switchboard controls. They plan to tackle this over the winter when they can take the board offline.



**Before: The TBL radio transmitter that Tom Horsfall is restoring in California...**



**After: Work is progressing nicely, soon it will find a new home on the SLATER.**

**From diesel generators to ship's clocks, we seem to always find the talent we need when we need it.** We recently received several more authentic Navy clocks. As an authentic time capsule of Navy life in the forties, complete in every detail, an important detail on any Navy ship is the complement of ship's clocks. And to be truly correct, those clocks need to work. For several years **Geoffrey Bullard** has helped support the project by maintaining and repairing our ship's clocks by himself. Recently we also got the support of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors. **Earl Herchenroder** was contacted by his friend **Ron Etchells**, a member of the Rip Van Winkle Chapter 40 of the NAWCC. Ron offered the support of NAWCC and received, delivered, picked-up, and returned the repaired clocks to Earl. Ron made minor repairs and adjustments to several SLATER clocks over the past year. When the repairs needed were above Ron's pay grade, he called in the real expert, **Rob Olson**, a long-time NAWCC member and Vice President of the RIP chapter. Rob is a full time watch and clock repairer under the banner of Adirondack Watch and Clock Repair. Rob's clock was a Seth Thomas with a broken mainspring. The broken mainspring was replaced and the movement was cleaned, lubricated and adjusted to keep proper time.



**The 2008 Fall Field Day Crew.**

**Jack Betterly has serviced four clocks of different manufacture throughout the year.** Jack is a relatively recent member of the NAWCC and RIP and has quickly made his experience and presence known and felt to the local membership. He is a Director of RIP and is now the Chapter Vice President. Jack

is also a regular member of the local "Monday Night Clock Group," an informal association of RIP members, friends, and newcomers who are interested in sharing experiences and learning about watch and clock repair and collecting. Prior to joining RIP, Jack was co-owner of Romanation Jewelers. A visit to the SLATER provides school children a chance to experience this important part of our nation's history first hand. Needless to say, we are grateful to have the support of the RIP Van Winkle Chapter of the NAWCC.

**Finally, the SLATER bond goes beyond the ship herself.** One Monday at lunch, **Clark Farnsworth** announced that because of his neck injury, he needed some help to cover his vintage 1912 cabin cruiser "Clarde" for the winter. All his shipmates seemed engrossed in eating and no one seemed to pay Clark much heed. I thought his plea for help had fallen on deaf ears. However, Clark reported back that on the appointed day, eight SLATER shipmates showed up to help him out. **Karl and Earl Herchenroder, Gus Negus, Dave Mardon, Don Shattuck, Erik Collin, Gene Jackey, Larry Williams, and Jim Gelston** all turned to to help their shipmate. It was a clear, bright morning with temperatures in the low 50s; a perfect morning for tarping over a yacht. The boat was out of the water and resting on blocks with the main deck about twenty feet above ground, awaiting winterizing.

**The boat gang arrived around 10:00 and got right to work installing the wooden framework over the boat that would support two large tarps.** When the frame was roughly half done someone yelled "coffee break." From on top of the boat someone yelled back "We have work to do! Don't need no coffee!" Then someone yelled "donut break," bringing all work to a sudden halt. After the short break the work resumed and the frame was quickly completed. Next, the tarps were rolled out on top of the frame and spread out. Tie down lines dropped over the side were secured to the frame the boat was resting on. Once the work was done Clark broke out lunch and beer. There was some grumbling as to why the beer hadn't appeared earlier but tapered off as mouths were stuffed with sandwiches and macaroni salad. Once lunch was finished everyone said their goodbyes, leaving Clark with one nicely covered boat and much gratitude in his heart. That's what being shipmates is all about, on and off the SLATER.

**See you next month.**