



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Vol. 15 No. 4, April 2012

We got the ship open to the public right on schedule on Wednesday April 4th. Our first month open to the public, and we lucked out with the weather. Schools were closed the week of April 8th, and the weather was perfect. From an income standpoint that week made the month. Also, we've put on our first three overnight encampments. As a newly named National Historic Landmark, we were honored on Thursday April 26th to be visited by Rear Admiral **David Titley**, assistant deputy chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance. Admiral Titley was part of the Navy's current 50/50 program whereby fifty flag officers are visiting fifty cities to promote the role of the Navy in our strategic defense. Aboard SLATER, following a reception in the wardroom, Admiral Titley was led through the ship by 89-year-old volunteer tour guide **Bill Scharoun**. Bill was a first class gunner's mate on USS OSMUS DE701 in the Pacific during World War II. The Admiral was no stranger to destroyers, having done a tour of duty as navigator aboard USS FARRAGUT, a guided-missile destroyer.



Chief Art Dott, Bill Scharoun and Admiral Titley.

The Admiral's message was clear when he said, "We all probably think we're paying enough for oil and gas today, right?" Could you imagine having to pay two, three, four times that amount if that supply was not assured? That's what could happen if we didn't have the Navy. We're really defending those sea lines. We're making sure that the world's economy and the U.S.' economy freely operates." The visit was covered by all the local media and we got some great press out of the event, including a TV clip.

That wasn't the only recognition we received this month. We were recognized by Excelsior College as one of their "Partners in Lifelong Learning." Chairman BJ Costello attended the awards ceremony and spoke on behalf of the SLATER to the distinguished group. **Heather Maron** represented SLATER at the New York State Museums in Conversation Conference at the Marriott on Wolf Road in Albany. The theme of the conference was "(Re)Visioning Museums," which included several panel-led sessions along with two keynote speakers, **Ron Chew**, and American Association of Museums President, **Ford Bell**. During the three-day conference, Heather participated in sessions such as, "Getting Smaller Smarter" and "Visitors in Conversation: Let's Ask Our Visitors What They Want!" The latter panel involved open-ended discussion about what museum visitors want from their experience, which included tours no longer than an hour, clean bathrooms, and hands-on learning. In addition, she used the opportunity to network with other museum professionals from throughout the state, and received a lot of great feedback about the great work SLATER has been doing. Later in the month, **"Boats" Haggart** joined Heather at the Bethlehem Historical Association's "Dads and Lads Day," which was an interactive event designed to engage boys and their fathers. Boats was on hand, with plenty of line and his bag of tools, to demonstrate various rope work. He made sure to stress that everything he was showing his audience is in fact used aboard the ship, and that a tour would prove that to anyone interested in learning more.



The Shipfitters fabricated a replacement for the missing bunk locker on the messdeck.



Sickbay is now back in business.

Doug Tanner and the shipfitters have had several projects going. They fabricated the missing bunk lockers on the messdecks, a task that they reminded me regularly would have been a lot easier if we'd done it before we had painted the place, and they could no longer weld and burn down there. As it was, they did all the assembly with pop rivets and machine screws, and did minimal damage to the fresh paint. They also spent a couple days back in sickbay installing the examination table and moving the sterilizer to its original proper location against the aft bulkhead. Then Erik Collin moved in with Thomas and Bob Scian and began cleaning the place and resetting the display. The shipfitters are also back in the shaft alleys. Once again, the shaft packing had frozen, thawed and is dripping. Erik Collin and Army ROTC Cadet Mike Forstner got both shaft alleys pumped dry and sponged out. Dave Mardon is building a steel pan that holds a sump pump. Pan and pump will sit below the drip to keep the bilge dry. They are plumbing the pump into the septic tank so we'll have a way to get the bilge water out of there. Doug is also planning to do some ultrasonic gauging down there to see how much metal is left.



Thomas Scian stenciled all our restored hedgehog projectiles.



Tour guide Dylan Cupolo shows Jamie Brinkman how to put up the call colors.

The aft septic pump started the season badly. The high water alarm kept going off and the pump wasn't cycling automatically. So, naturally Tanner looked to his trusted assistant Super Dave to help him out. Now, Dave's all-around abilities are awesome, but his lack of talent and motivation when it comes to doing any chore in the galley is legendary. It's generally assumed that if anything ever happens to Dave's wife, Sharon, Dave will starve to death in three days. But the morning Doug said, "Dave, after breakfast we'll go aft and fix that sewer pump," was the first morning Dave, who previously never lifted a finger in the galley suddenly was motivated to clean up after breakfast. As Doug headed aft to begin work on the septic tank, and John Thompson headed into the galley to clean up, Dave said, "John, I'll take care of the galley. You can help Doug."

The Chippers, Ron Mazure, Don Miller, Walt Stuart and Earl Herchenroder have been going gangbusters on the 02 level forward, chipping the deck, which just happens to be my overhead in the ship's office. Unfortunately, they have punched through the deck in several places over the radio room and over my office. I managed to keep ahead of the holes in the radio room by patching them with a liquid steel epoxy product called Devcon. It seems to be holding just fine. However, one Monday morning, after a heavy rainstorm I opened my office to find all the files on my desk soaked and turning to papier-mache. I got rid of a lot of old files that morning, so if I owe you a letter and you don't get a response, your letter probably got tossed out. It just so happened that both Tanner and Mardon were aboard that day, so the holes over the ship's office got a right and proper weld repair. This, of course, led to a lot of hazing of the radiomen about "Bondo" being good enough for the radio room, but not good enough for the "Executive Director's Office." As Doug said, "Since the grant money is pouring in, I guess that welding the holes in the grant office justifies weld while the radio room just rates Bondo. Walt had become our primary painter, but after one week of nice warm days, it turned too cold to paint for the rest of the month."



Volunteer Nelson Potter weaving his cargo net.



Mike Dingmon makes an adjustment to the 8-268A generator set.

Elsewhere about the ship, Clark Farnsworth has been working on that water tight door. Our sailmaker, Angelo Bracco, put new snaphooks and rings on the new set of signal flags that we bought, and has been making gunsight covers and repairing the flagbag covers. Bill Haggart has gotten the anchor windlass room and his deck gear locker all cleaned out and all the new line and cable stowed. He's been repairing snaking and the wooden Jacob's ladder. His running mate **Nelson Potter** moved his cargo net project up to the boat deck where he has been working on it between tours. **Larry Williams, Chris Fedden, Gene Jackey and Earl Herchenroder** got the main deck B-1 vent fanroom covers

The engineers continue to progress with the overhaul of main engine number four. Karl Herchenroder, Gus Negus, Mike Dingmon and Gary Lubrano continue to demonstrate that they don't know the meaning of "cosmetic restoration." They gave me a list of about \$2,000 of parts that they wanted for the engine. When I said that was kind of hard to justify in light of our tight financial condition and the fact that we weren't going anywhere soon, they whittled it down to \$100 of fuel line gaskets from Hatch and Kirk. Gary Dieckman came to their rescue and donated two complete gasket sets that they needed. Down in Long Island, Herb Dahlhouse located the injector timing tool that they needed, so that saved another \$75. I just hope they remember to uncover the exhaust pipe when they get ready to start the engine.

Down in the bilges, we've had students from the Nuclear Power Training Center in West Milton continuing to come back to assist with bilge preservation. I use the word "assist" loosely because none of us are agile enough to crawl around in the bilges anymore. Chief Owen Hooper has been sending us volunteers while they are waiting for their classes to start. The first group was Nathan McDuff, Chassen Steward, Randall Dowell and Logan Robinson. We sent them down into the B-4 bilges under the propulsion motors with the instruction, "Get it clean, but don't use anything heavier than a putty knife on the shell plating." They pulled out about ten five gallon pails of rust. But the clincher was that the same group came back the following Monday, fully aware of what they were in for. They started classes the following week, but on Monday April 30th another group, Harry Burroughs, Mackie Anderson, Josh Goff and Chris Ketcham reported aboard for the same duty. We'll see if they come back next week. In terms of long term preservation, this is one of the most critical projects on the ship today, because these hulls do rot from the inside out. Keep your bilges dry.

bolted in place, completing another two-year welding and preservation project. I haven't seen the whaleboat, but I understand that **Rocky Rockwood** and **Dave Jeffries** have nearly completed the painting and that it should be coming up our way soon. Dave also completed cleaning and polishing all of the refrigeration coils on the portside reefer space. **Gary Sheedy** completed painting the space, and it looks like the day she came out of the builder's yard.



Alan Fox and Glenn Harrison look on as Julianne Madsen tries to lift one of the new chocks donated by the Schoellhorn-Albrecht Company.

For those of you who have been with us long enough to know the saga of the endless chock project, our problems may be over. We sent out a request to **John Richardson** of the **Schoellhorn-Albrecht Company** in St. Louis, manufacturers of chocks. John generously responded with an offer to donate six chocks so we can complete our repair project. The chock problem on a sixty-eight-year-old ship is that original

chocks were hollow and open at either end. Thus, over the years, salt water incursion caused serious deterioration inside the chock, as well as annoying rust streaking down the hull. In one instance when we were moving the ship, a tugboat's polypropylene line actually tore through a chock and broke. Up to now our solution had been to try and repair the chocks, replacing the bases with sections cut from 8" diameter pipe and doubling up the weak spots, a very labor intensive and time consuming process for our aging volunteers. Complete replacement of the six most critical chocks will not only insure our ability to move the ship safely, but also free up our shipfitters for other restoration tasks. We thank John and **Schoellhorn-Albrecht** for being a part of our effort. We want to thank Coast Guard **Dick Walker** for his part in working out this donation.



Matt Simpson, James Conlon and Dave Mardon aboard the S.S. CAPE JOHNSON.



Hoisting a coil of line off the ship the hard way, without a crane

Despite the lack of vintage ships, Barry Witte led another foray to the James River Reserve Fleet. Barry, Dave Mardon, James Conlon, Greg Krawczyk and Matt Simpson participated. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the workers at the James River Fleet. With no crane service available due to high winds, we could have never offloaded the material without their help. To give you an idea of the value of the trip, the material they brought back included over a dozen like-new CO2 and dry chemical fire extinguishers, five 300' coils of inch and a half diameter manila rope, a 200' spool of steel lifeline cable, a couple buckets of assorted shackles and cable clamps, and the clincher, eight brand new WWII Navy-style bronze lifeline turnbuckles and sister hooks out of the storeroom on a modern ship that didn't use them. Who knows what they're worth? Go figure. But probably the most valuable find was that the ship had the same fire detection equipment we have on SLATER, so Barry was able to grab enough modules and sensors to keep our system going for years to come.



Bob Scian planning to stow the coil of rope aboard SLATER.



The new rope at home in SLATER's anchor windlass room.

While the radio gang awaits the arrival of the new TBL motor generator armature from USS COBIA in Wisconsin, they have busied themselves working on receivers. Jerry Jones, Joe Breyer and Mike Wyles got our first RAL-7 receiver operational, a primitive piece of equipment that dates back to the thirties. They were quite satisfied with the AM reception they were getting. They then went on to tackle a more sophisticated wartime RBC receiver, and it took a couple weeks to get that unit functioning beautifully. The unit came off the cruiser DES MOINES, and Jerry commented that they must have been heavy smokers aboard, because the entire insides of the receiver were coated with cigarette film. The only other problem with the RBC was a small cosmetic issue. The receiver is postwar gray, and the wartime units were almost always black. Jerry knew that I would come into the radio room and cringing, asking, "Jonz, when are you going to get that grey boat anchor out from the middle of all my black radios?" Well, it seems Tom Horsfall is working on that, too. He has a radio expert in New Mexico who is willing to donate a black RBC to the SLATER in working condition. We're in the process of working out the details. As the Historic Ships Association Radio Weekend approaches, it is doubtful that we will have our WWII TBL on line for this year's event. Jerry is thinking about working the event with a modern transmitter and a WWII receiver so we can say that we're half authentic. Be listening for us on the air as WW2DEM.



All cleaned up and ready for the public.

We are moving forward with plans to open up the aft machinery spaces for limited visitation. We're stretched thin for tour guides, so we're trying to recruit some new volunteers for this duty. USS SLATER is taking applications for volunteers interested in serving as engineroom docents. The Museum is initiating a new program whereby adult visitors taking the regular tour will be offered a tour of

the aft machinery spaces for an additional fee. The additional tour will be available during regular tour hours, dependent upon available personnel to staff the tour. We are seeking volunteers to assist with this program. The volunteer position will consist of going through a comprehensive 32-hour training course to understand the development, history, evolution, and operation of the destroyer escort propulsion machinery. Volunteers will then be asked to stand six-hour watches, one day a week in the SLATER's engine rooms. At the end of each tour, the regular docent will hand over to the engineroom

docent any visitor who has signed up for the engineroom tour. The engineroom docent will then take them through the aft machinery spaces and offer a 20-minute lecture on destroyer escort propulsion. There will be downtime between tours and the docents will be asked to help with general custodial maintenance of the engineering spaces when not actually engaged in giving tours. The engine room docent must be knowledgeable, entertaining, and must maintain strict control over all visitors to insure a safe visit. Those interested in interviewing for the position should contact Erik Collin aboard USS SLATER at 431-1943.

There's no point in talking about the Michigan and USS HUSE workweeks this issue. By the time you read this, they will probably be here, so we'll have a full report of their accomplishments next month. But one last time for you last minute planners: The Michigan Field Week will be May 6 to 11. If you want to participate, email **Ron Zarem**. The HUSE group will be aboard the following week, May 13-18. If that week works out for you and you want to give us a hand, contact **George Amandola** at Gamand@aol.com We can always use all the help we can get, and the kids and grand kids are always welcome, though we require that youngsters be at least 12 years old to participate and must be accompanied by an adult relative.



Paul Czesak and Elizabeth Church-Leviton.

Finally, we say farewell to soon-to-be commissioned Ensign Elizabeth Church Leviton. The 2011-2012 leader of the Rensselaer Polytechnic NROTC volunteers has done a yeoman job keeping Mids involved. Midshipman **Steffan Maiwald** will be taking her place for the coming academic year. As for Liz, she was never afraid of the dirtiest jobs. Midshipman Liz has worked from the bilges to aft steering and spent many hours

on needle guns. We like to think we've rounded out the naval education for her and her crew. She wrote us that she really enjoyed having the opportunity to work on the ship for the last four years; they have been some of the best times she had since starting school at RPI. As she heads out to her new duty station on USS Pearl Harbor LSD 52 out of San Diego, we hope that she keeps in touch.

See you next month.