

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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*Help keep a volunteer warm this winter.*



**SLATER Volunteers celebrated Veterans Day working on their ship.**

**This is the time of year we ask that if you appreciate what we are doing to preserve the USS SLATER, please go to our website at [and hit the donate button. It's Winter Fund Drive Time.](#)**

**All of you who are familiar with USS SLATER's annual operating schedule know what this time of the year brings. Our last day open to the public this year is December 1<sup>st</sup>. That is the end of our ticket sales, souvenir sales and overnight encampments for the season. It is also the end of our operating income stream, but not the end of our operations. There is a lot of work to be done, especially this year. Plans are now being made to tackle one of our most ambitious projects yet, drydocking the USS**

SLATER in New York City in the spring. That is why we chose this time of the year to make our annual appeal for donations, our Winter Fund Drive, so you can help keep a volunteer warm this winter.

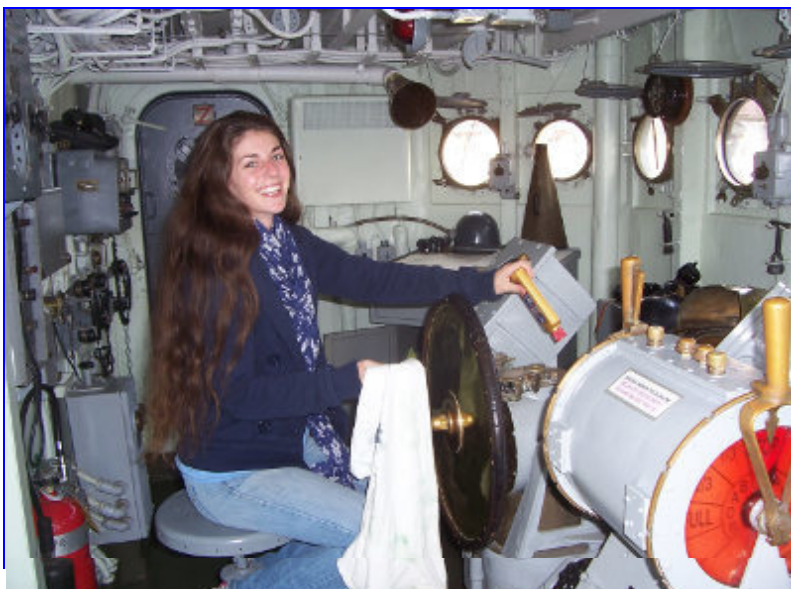
**As we approach our 17th year in Albany on the Hudson, we aboard USS SLATER want to thank you for your generous support of our past Winter Fund Campaigns.** Your donations have enabled our volunteers and staff to continue the restoration efforts during the months when we are closed to the public and have no regular operating income. Your donations to the Winter Fund have always paid for the heating oil, electricity, insurance, office supplies and all the tools, paint and supplies that the volunteers need to keep SLATER moving forward and getting better.



**Tour guide Charlie Poltenson teaching the girls from Bais Yakov Adas Yeremin School in Brooklyn.**

**Our Veterans Day commemoration was the last shipboard event of the season.** Chairman **BJ Costello** emceed the event, which received widespread media coverage and was a nice way to end our season of ceremonies. Our last event, the Pearl Harbor commemoration and breakfast will be held at the **Zaloga American Legion Post** on Everett Road at 0830 on Saturday December 7<sup>th</sup>. We ran several end-of-the-season school tours through the ship including 183 girls from the **Bais Yakov Adas Yeremin School** from Brooklyn aboard on a very cold and windy Tuesday; one

of the most appreciative and polite groups we've ever hosted. We pushed the overnight camping program later into November than we ever have despite the worry of having a fresh waterline freeze and break. It paid great dividends and we got away without any problems.



**Tour guide Julianne taking care of the brightwork before the visitors arrive.**

**Heather Maron's unsung corps of tour guides did another amazing job again this year.** They are the people who make USS SLATER come alive for the visitors. I'm sure if Heather wrote SIGNALS, you'd have a whole different perspective on the project. Go to [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) and read some of the comments from our visitors.



Thanks to all the tour guides and overnight chaperones who are the public face of the project. I think thanks to the guides can be summed up in this email we received from visitor Ed Begiebing. He wrote in an email: "We would like to extend our thanks for an amazing tour of the USS Slater. It was on my bucket list for many years. The tour guide was very friendly courteous and knowledgeable. It was very cold that day and he took a lot of time with us. We are very grateful for his time and service to our country. Great Job, we will be seeing you again in the summer...AWESOME Staff. Thanks Again"

**So thank you Heather, Jim, Don, Vince, Bob D, Bob H, and Bob B., Julianne, Grant, Charlie, Ruth, Dan, Bill, John, Jack, Alan, Floyd, Stretch, Chuck, Nelson, Paul, Leo, Ken, Dick, Dave, and, for driving in from Binghamton every Sunday, Tom. I hope you didn't miss anyone. You guys are the greatest.**



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**We held our annual Fundraiser at the Fort Orange Club on**

**November 9<sup>th</sup> and it was an evening of fine food and drink.**

We are deeply indebted to major sponsors **RADM & Mrs. Marty Leukhardt, Sheridan & Susan Biggs, Gary Dieckman and Executive Printing & Direct**

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Many local dignitaries attended

including Congressman **Paul**

**Tonko, Assemblyman John**

**McDonald, and former**

**Congressman Mike McNulty. The event raised nearly \$30,000 for the Hull Fund. The evening's program centered on Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings, who received the 2013 Trustee's Award. It was Mayor Jennings who, back in 1997 after the SLATER had lost her berth at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum, gave the green light to bring the SLATER to Albany as part of his efforts to redevelop the Hudson waterfront. Not everyone thought it was such a great idea the day the ship pulled into Albany, but thanks to our volunteers and supporters we have succeeded beyond anyone's expectations. As part of the program, local artist Len Tantillo presented the Mayor with a**

framed copy of his painting of the SLATER underway entitled “Contact” and inscribed to commemorate the evening. **BJ Costello** expressed our indebtedness to the Mayor for giving the SLATER a home and a new lease on life. Following the presentation Captain **Calvin Slocumb**, commanding officer of the Holy Cross –Yale University NROTC Consortium, gave a presentation on the state of on-campus Naval Reserve officer training. The final presentation was a briefing on our visit to Caddell Shipyard and the state of our efforts to get the SLATER into drydock.

**And that’s where we go next.** As a result of discovering that we have some severe pitting at the waterline amidships this summer, we contacted Caddell Shipyard a few months ago to get our first hard numbers on what it would cost to drydock SLATER. The numbers came back lower than we anticipated, based on a 3/8 inch thick, four-foot wide steel doubler around the hull to give us some much-needed protection against the Hudson River ice. I was originally dead-set against doubling, but I’m leaning towards it now for the following reasons:

- **The pitting we are seeing at the port waterline along the machinery spaces is worrisome enough to warrant attention now.**
- **Ice puncturing our quarter-inch hull is a very real concern.** With the available funding, we will only be able to crop and renew a limited area of shell plating. With doublers we can afford to do a four-foot band around the entire hull at the waterline giving us greatly improved protection against ice damage.
- **The estimate for plate replacement did not include any of the internal preparation work needed to access the side of the ship and be able to back weld.** This could be extensive thus expensive. The work is right opposite the main wireways in the machinery spaces.
- **We have been advised that it would be dangerous to disturb the main cableways.** These bundles would have to be broken loose from the side of the ship and pulled inboard to protect the cable from cutting and so the back welding could be done. We felt with the age and brittleness of the cable, there was the potential to do a lot of damage to our wiring if we move those bundles.
- **Doubling eliminates the damage and dirt created by cropping to the restored areas inside the ship.**
- **After three years of fundraising we don't foresee any additional large donations to the Hull Fund.** We believe one million dollars is the number we are going to have for planning.

**With that in mind and their estimate in hand we met with the shipyard president Steve Kalil and his chief estimator Joe Eckhart to get their opinions and firm up our work plan.** Perception is everything. Thus, it is with the shipyard experience. I have no personal experience to judge it; all my life I've been hearing stories from old Sailors about what a dreaded experience going through a Navy Yard overhaul was. The yard workers would steal everything not welded down, the yard will bill you for work that was never done and that it will be the worst kind of adversarial relationship. Surrounded by our happy, dedicated volunteers, that's not the environment I'm used to working in.



**Thus, you can imagine my surprise when we were cordially greeted by these two gentlemen who said at the outset, "I know you guys don't have a lot of money so we'll try and work with you."** They were most giving of their time. They met with us for an hour and then took us on a tour of the yard. The drydock presently best suited to hold SLATER is their drydock number 6. That dock is under repair and will be ready in January. We will sandblast the entire hull, add the four-foot ice band, a foot above the waterline and three foot below, replace the zincs, and repaint the hull. We have set February 15th as a target date to be ready to move, depending on the ice. If conditions permit, I'd like to leave sooner so we lose less of the visitation season. Between now and then there is a vast amount of work to be done to get ready. They anticipate the work will take nine weeks.

**To get ready for the shipyard all the material against the hull must be moved inboard or off the ship.** That's 43 compartments full of accumulated gear that must be dealt with. The six-foot section of the hull on both sides that will be impacted by the hot work must be made accessible, marked, and all the fiberglass insulation removed so the steel is visible for fire watch. If the shipyard has to do this it becomes very expensive. We will be placing storage containers on the pier to receive the material that must come off the ship. All combustible material must be removed from the lower magazines and stowed. Bolted manhole covers buried under years of accumulated junk must be opened. All lube and fuel oil tanks must be opened, cleaned and degassed.



**Bill Wetterau, Larry Williams and Dick Walker sorting out tangled sound powered phones.**

**To prepare the ship for tow we must arrange a tow survey.** Coast Guard regulations and the towing firm put a tight limit on the number of people who can be aboard as line handlers and for security. Shipboard services will be provided when the ship is in drydock. I will plan to be aboard the ship the whole time the ship is in the yard with a small pool of our volunteers on a rotating basis to provide labor to assist the shipyard with issues such as moving gear, insulation removal, and opening and closing tanks. With this in mind, in addition to our Saturdays and Mondays, we're working towards one or two more active volunteer days a week to get everything we need done.

To try and anticipate potential problems we formed a **Hull Committee** consisting of **Barry Witte, Doug Tanner, Bill Siebert, Greg Krawczyk, Gary Sheedy, Tony Esposito, Erik Collin and Ed Zajkowski**. An Annapolis grad helped build three carriers at Newport News; a certified level 3 pressure vessel inspector and welder; a working marine engineer who's worked with Caddell's; an alumnus of Maine Maritime who was Chief Engineer aboard several destroyers and frigates; the guy who restored the reefer deck; and the greatest scrounger of destroyer escort blueprints in the world. We owe a great debt to **Ed Zajkowski** who has spent countless hours poring over old DE blueprints, acquired back in the seventies as the old ships were going for scrap. They had all their documentation aboard and a six-pack bought you as much paper as you could haul off. Ed has created a free-ranging email discussion within the Hull Committee whereby Ed throws out the potential problems we may encounter and solutions are hammered out. But, no doubt available funding will make many of the decisions for us.



**Ron Frankosky** came up from Jersey to spend two days in our bilges.



**We are beginning an exciting phase for the project.** Money will be tight, as we do not have as much money as I would like to have going into this phase. Doubtless, there are many things that we would like to do that will have to be deferred due to lack of funds. However, given the pitting we are experiencing along the waterline on the port side and the fact that we do not see any other sources of major funding available in the coming year, we feel we need to act now. We will need all the help we can get in order to stay within our budget.



**Most of you have seen first-hand the incredible accomplishments of our volunteers.** Most recently, the restoration of the reefer space, the ongoing work in the aft machinery spaces, the radio shack, the restoration of the 20mm guns and our beautiful motor whaleboat and the continued restoration of our watertight integrity to all compartments forward and aft of the machinery spaces. But, while all this is going on, the bills still need to be paid. The insurance, utility bills, supplies for the volunteers all need to be paid for. This is where your donations to the Winter Fund play such a critical role during these months in keeping us from having to draw down our savings and enabling the Endowment and Hull Fund to continue to grow and thus ensure SLATER's future.



**Lending a helping hand to the Coast Guard by providing an overnight berth for the USCGC WIRE.**

**I have always tried to lead by example, and ever since the Winter Fund drive first started back in 1998, pledged that I would be the first one to contribute my hundred dollars.** I continue to make my donation every year but it is now impossible for me to be first as so many of you anticipate the call and donate several months in advance of the drive. Again, I would ask each of you to match what I have given and donate \$100. If you can afford to give more, we truly appreciate it. And if you can't, please give what

you can as every penny counts to get us through the winter. This organization stands for comradeship, companionship and compassion. Please take the time to fill out the enclosed donation envelope and put it in the mail. We are proud of the fact that so many of you now look upon SLATER as **YOUR** ship, no matter what the name and hull number was of the ship you served on. We are equally proud of the fact that so many of the sons, daughters and grandkids of DE veterans are now joining up, as they are the future of the Museum. And, we are so pleased that many of you, without any connection to military service, are choosing to support SLATER and all she stands for.

**There are other ways to help the SLATER.** For State and Federal employees, another way to give is through the **State Employees Federated Appeal** or the **Combined Federal Campaign**. Look for DEHM in the associated giving catalogs. **Corporate matching gifts** mean "free" money for us. In 2013 we have received nearly \$10,000 in matching gifts from companies as diverse as **IBM, Boeing, and Bank of America**. **GE** is at the top matching over \$4,000 in gifts this year. Many companies, both large and small, have matching gift programs for employees and retirees. Also, 2013 has been a very good year for the stock market. We are able to accept donations of securities. Please call Rosehn at 518-431-1943 for the procedure.





**Happy engineers Ken Myrick, Gary Lubrano and Karl Herchenroder. We're all counting on your help.**

So once again, it's time to help keep a volunteer warm this winter. To donate electronically go to our homepage at [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and hit the donate button. Or, click on the link at the bottom of this page for a printable form and mail it with your check or credit card information. All donors will receive our mailed quarterly newsletter TRIM BUT DEADLY. A link to a sample issue is available on our home page. We thank you for the faith you have placed in us to make sure that USS SLATER will remain afloat and alive as a true living history museum honoring our nation's veterans.

**Please give as generously as you can to the 2013 Winter Fund Appeal.**

