



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Vol. 8 no. 3 March 2005

I just returned from the annual Historic Naval Ship's Board of Directors Meeting in Annapolis. It was the first time I've taken my wool watch cap off since mid October. It's great to see old friends again, but the high point of the trip was receiving a **\$5,000.00 Thomas J. Peltin Destroyer Grant Program** check from the National Association of Destroyer Veterans, the **Tin Can Sailors**. The group has traditionally made annual grants to all the destroyer museums, but up to this date we have never been included in the program. This was a first for us. Executive Director **Terry Miller** had asked me to submit a project application several months ago, and we asked for funding to help replace our old balsa wood life rafts that are rotting away with Styrofoam replicas. They agreed to fund the project. I believe this is in recognition of the large number of Tin Can Sailors who also served on DEs during their naval service. Long time friend and former HNSA Executive Director **Chan Zucker** made the presentations to all the destroyer type vessels, and we are most grateful for them taking us under their wing. For my friends in the Chief's Quarters who form my Saturday morning support group, it was nice to be able to say that on one trip, I came home with more than I spent. A lot more.



Gary Sheedy doing the final scaling in the electrical storeroom.



The storeroom after the bulkheads were sprayed.

Two weeks until opening day and spring seemed to come very slowly this year. The Hudson is free of ice, but we have to wait until all that chunky stuff on the Mohawk breaks up and comes down past us before we can put the camels in to begin season eight. In the meantime, the chippers, **Chris Fedden, Jim Gelston, Dave Hamilton, Peter Jez, Stan Murawski, Gene Jackey and Ed Whitbeck** have been going full bore to finish wrapping up the winter projects aboard, the galley, laundry, and the electrical storeroom off the reefer deck. We have the contract painter scheduled for next week, and we'll get those areas sprayed out in white. We're just now getting to the cleaning and masking part of the job. **Erik Collin** is heading out today to buy about forty gallons of paint, now that it's finally getting warm enough to put it on. He's

worked his way through the ship touching up the interiors and repainting all the interior decks. Our seasonal contract painter, **Kevin Sage**, was back aboard and he sprayed out the laundry and **Gary Sheedy's** electrical storeroom on the portside of the reefer machinery space. Both spaces look great. **Rocky Rockwood** has started our last inside project, chipping out the Bosun's storeroom up in the peak. The rest of the chippers will follow him until it warms up so we can work outside. **Les Yarbrough** is off the binnacle list and has been helping **Nelson Potter** weaving fenders. **Rich Pavlovic** is back to try and step into **Dave Floyd's** shoes taking care of the gun mounts. And **Pat Perrella** is back catching up on the museum inventory and making plans to get the DE museum space cleaned up and back together now that the work in the laundry is wrapping up.

Doug Tanner, Chuck Teal and Tim Benner are working on the new septic tank in C-201L. As we said, the idea is to get the sewage out of the fuel oil tank and away from the skin of the ship to reduce the corrosion issues. We're indebted to **Steve Barber of Port Welding** here in Albany who assisted Doug with the fabrication of the tank and let him use their shop equipment to shear and bend the stainless steel. Hopefully that tank will outlast all of us. Doug's biggest problem now is finding someone to clean and check out the old sewer pump before he installs it in the new tank. Nobody seems to be much interested in that job.

The other big project is almost finished, the enlargement of the classroom over in the Visitor Center, that I'm not supposed to call a trailer. Our thanks go out to **Dennis Nagi, Tom Moore, Paul Czesak, Barry Witte and Gary Sheedy** for all the work they have done over the winter. But we are most grateful to Rosehn for her patience for continuing to live and work in what can best be described as a "War zone" all winter long. The chaos is coming to an end. The expanded classroom is now about a third larger and will enable us to much better fulfill our mission as an educational facility.



Doug Tanner welding up the new stainless steel septic tank.

In the galley, the new ranges are all wired in and have been checked out. We'll be having our first formal luncheon on them shortly. Thus far the only thing they have been used for is by Erik to heat up the wash water so he can clean the interior decks prior to painting. The galley looks great and the restoration comes very close to making it look just like the original blueprints show. There was a big debate about counter space. The crew wanted a cutting board added on to the counter, over the dough mixer. Damned if it wasn't shown on the original plans. I thought they just wanted to make another unauthentic modification to make their cooking more convenient. **Stan Murawski** has done a great job of cleaning all the stainless steel and restoring the dough mixer.



The refurbished galley with new refrigerator, stoves and utensil rack.



The galley looking port and forward. Note the original light fixtures have replaced the old florescent fixtures.

The engineers are into big problems. Gus Negus, Karl Herchenroder and Adam Van Horn went all through the emergency diesel generator' lube oil system and found no problems that would have caused a loss of oil pressure. Then, in digging deeper they found some broken studs on the oil pan, which Gus believes, came off the gears that drive the blower on the front end. The next project will be to pull the blower off and see what we've got. So we have some big engineering projects lined up for the Michigan crew come spring. Gus also plans to have them work on the h.p. air compressor to replace the rings in the third stage cylinder. If any of you have any information on the HP air compressor from a CANNON (DET) or EDSALL (FMR) class ship in B-3, we'd sure like to hear from you. Anybody take a tech manual as a souvenir? The nameplates are missing on not only our compressor, but also the compressor on the STEWART in Galveston. Reading in the scrap sale books, we believe the compressor is an Ingersoll-Rand, 3,000-PSI, 3-cylinder 695 RPM 7.5 CFM unit. The motor is 24 hp, just in case any of you guys want to start looking for rings, or have a manual laying around the house. The Michigan crew will also be working on the ships service generator in B-3 to mount the gauge board and pipe in the instruments for the 8-268A, and run a fuel line for the engine and the fuel return.



Eric Rivet, Bill Kraus, Ken Kaskoun and Shaun Gordon putting covers on the mattresses in the forward crew's quarters.



Joe Breyer working on the Galley vent.

We're in debt to John McMichael, the Master Chief who is doing such a great job on the STEWART and CAVALLA in Galveston. Barry Witte had to go down that way to attend an education conference, so he made a side trip to Galveston to do some research. John welcomed him with open arms and gave Barry access to the whole ship so he could photograph some of the details that we are missing. As I say, he planned to photograph the nameplate on their hp compressor, but it was one of the few label plates that was missing.

On the other hand, we've been really lucky locating gear recently. Peter Papadakos of the Gyrodyne Foundation gave us a lot of help in locating some gear out in Suisun Bay California. Peter worked to obtain several pieces of navigational gear to be used in our educational programs including sextants and bearing circles. But that wasn't his big find. He managed to photograph an original DE surface search radar consol, an SLA unit on one of the ships out there. We are now working with the Maritime Commission to try and obtain the unit for our own CIC. Rich Pekelney, a volunteer with the San Francisco Maritime Museum has agreed (been drafted) into helping coordinate the acquisition for us. If we get permission to take it, the removal and transportation will be pretty involved, but this is one of the last pieces of gear we need to make the SLATER complete.



Rosehn's Table Exhibit at the Saratoga Teacher's Fair.

We are so indebted to all of you who contributed to the SLATER Winter Fund this year. The total contributions for the 2004-05 Appeal are over \$50,000.00 from individual donors to date. Your donations kept us from having to fall back on our savings, so that money will be used for the long-term preservation of SLATER's hull when the time comes to get her into a shipyard. Once again, thanks for taking care of us. This is no easy business when Uncle Sam's Navy isn't there to write the check.

On March 11, Rosehn Gipe took our traveling show to Saratoga for the New York State Council for the Social Studies Annual Convention. We were among nineteen museums and cultural sites in their "Cultural

Resource Showcase." This was a big opportunity to present our school tour program to over 700 teachers. It was also a chance to check out our "competition." Well worth the trip. We will also be involved with the 6th Annual Albany History Fair presented on Sunday, May 1 at the Albany Heritage Area Visitors Center from Noon to 4 p.m. The theme of this year's fair is "Places, Spaces and Faces of Albany", and the event will include tours, displays, and a variety of family activities. Several organizations, including the New York State Museum, Albany County Historical Association, Underground Railroad History Project, New York State Capitol, Schuyler Mansion State Historic Site, Albany Institute of History & Art and our own USS SLATER, will have display tables. For more information, contact the Visitors Center 434-0405.

Lots of other people have been helping all winter long who remained unnamed here. Dennis Nagi, Paul Czesak, Penelope Welbourn and Gordon Lattey all pulled together to get the tour guides oriented for the new season. They set up several retraining sessions for all the guides to review procedures and refresh their memories. We held our first "Welcome back and pizza party"

on March 6th, and training sessions attended by guides **Alan Fox, Jim Kuba, Fred Sirois, Dick and Maralyn Walker, Chuck Lossi, Chris Soulia, Jim Gelston, Chuck Marshall, Al Van Derzee, Floyd Hunt, Bob Whitney, Bob Donlon, Bob Dawson, Matt Zembo, Bill Goralski, Alan Guard, Chuck Teal, Nelson Potter, Mike Milian, Tim Benner, Eric Weidman, Glen Harrison, Tom McLaughlin,**

David Athay, Jack Madden, Russ Ferrer, Ken Kaskoun, Dan Goldstein, and Art Dott. The sessions were well-attended and the gang sounds like they're ready to go. We also had calls and cards from **Claire Oesterreich, Charles Miner, Dennis Morrissey, Mike Long and Bill Scharoun,** to let us know they're thinking of us. I think the only ones we missed were **Les and Annette Beauchaine,** who refused to leave their post at Crossgates. And Lord knows, I forgot somebody, but the hatch outside my office has a dogging wrench close at hand that can be used to refresh my memory.

We have hired Eric Rivet from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who recently completed his Masters degree in History, as our Education Coordinator. Eric has spent the last eight years working as an abused, oppressed and under-appreciated tour guide down at the USS KIDD museum in Baton Rouge, giving tours to school students and staying overnight with the shipboard campers. Now we are giving him a chance to manage a group of abused, oppressed and under-appreciated tour guides of his own. Hopefully, his past experiences will give him some sympathy and appreciation for those who do the job. When we brought him up for an interview, he managed to fly out just before the last big snow storm, so we

haven't clued him in on just how bad it can be. Our advice was just invest in the best thermal underwear you can get. And to those who may look suspiciously at the fact that there are now three ex-employees from the USS KIDD working here, rest assured there's no conspiracy. Just think of it as a cultural exchange program. And don't be surprised if we declare Mardi Gras a holiday.



The 2005 Tour Guide Crew at their orientation muster.



Ready to head upriver to Albany and home.



Over in Kuwait, Beth Spain is on patrol.

Late word from Clark Farnsworth up in Scotia is that the ice has cleared from the Mohawk. We talked to Bob Cross and he has lined up the crane for Camel Day, scheduled for Monday, March 28th, and we hope to move the SLATER later in the week, and be in place for Friday 1 April for our opening at the Snow Dock. All that excitement will make for good copy in the April Signals, but I hate to hold this issue up any longer. And newbie **Eric Rivet** will find out just what that little clause in the job description, "Any and all additional duties as may be assigned" really means when he's wearing a hardhat pulling on a tagline Monday.

Finally, at the Historic Ships conference, a lively discussion was underway about the placement of ships, and the number of vessels that seem to be directly under highway bridges, and the problems that result with rainwater, debris, and the salt washing off the bridges and onto the ships increasing the corrosion problems. From the back of the room a hand went up from **Captain Rocco Montesano**, who runs the carrier LEXINGTON down in Corpus Christi, Texas. He asked the question and made the statement, "Why would anyone put salt on highways? That's the dumbest thing I ever heard of." Stay warm Rocco. We'll be thinking about you in July.

See you next month from the "Other Side."



High Water in Rensselaer.