

# SLATER SIGNALS

## The Newsletter of the USS SLATER'S Volunteers

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The SLATER remains moored at the port of Albany, with the space being donated by the Port Commission. Our first volunteer meeting in December saw thirty people attend and fill out volunteer applications. Eight early birds jumped the gun and began work in December. The primary focus of our effort while the ship remains cold and dark has been cleaning the electrical distribution boards and circuit breakers to remove years of built up grease and oil film, and to diagram the electrical distribution system. Volunteers Tony Dudes and LCDR Barry Witte have been the team leaders on this job. Another project has been securing the ventilation openings to keep the ship as warm as we can this winter. We have also been sorting and organizing much of the gear aboard. In terms of spare parts and equipment, We don't believe there is a ship in better shape than the SLATER.

To give you an idea of the spirit of this crew, imagine a cold Saturday in December. You pull around the shed to see the ship with eight cars and trucks parked alongside. Two of the cars have trailers attached, and on those trailers are generators so the guys can have lights and power tools. These guys even bring their own electricity and they don't even bill the foundation for gas.

The local Naval Reserve Units, Naval Militia, and the Naval Reactor Training site at Ballston Spa are all getting involved to help restore the SLATER. The acquisition of equipment has also continued, as the nine tri-walls of gear from Suisun Bay has arrived in Albany. We have also acquired a file cabinet full of blueprints on the GM-278 and Cleveland 3-268A diesel engines.

Mark Peckham of the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation has worked very hard to complete the application for the SLATER to be listed on the Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Properties. Processing and approval of the listing on the National Register will take some time, but hopefully, this will provide an additional source of grant funding.

On Friday, December 12th we had to shift the SLATER forward 150' at her berth. Capt. Ralph Carpino of the tug Frances Turecamo held us off, and his crew assisted our volunteers handling lines. For a brief few minutes we were underway again, and it felt good. Unfortunately we weren't formal enough to shift colors. Our thanks go out to volunteers Tom Beeler (DD878), Bob Calendar (DE744), Les Bouchaine (DE509), Hack Charbonneau, Mark Peckham, and Hal Connely who helped handle lines. And then there's Ed Wakeman (FFG15) who was called out to slack lines on New Years Day with his sine, the coldest day of the year. We are also in debt to Hal Hatfield who has loaned us a 115 volt Honda generator. We used it to perk our first pot of coffee and light the Christmas tree on the wardroom table. A West Point Graduate, Hal got a little testy around the time of the Army-Navy Game, but he has since calmed down and stopped threatening to take his generator back.

We also weather the surprise February flood with no problem. We kept a watch on the ship from 2300 until 0400 to slack lines during the high tide period. At least we didn't have to deal with ice and snow.

Our most immediate concern is the preparation of the ship for winter. We have identified three potential hazards to the ship. First is the pressure of ice on the hull. The solution to this will be to hang five water circulators below the keel. These operate on the principle of bringing warmer water from the bottom to the surface and hopefully will keep the area around the ship free of ice. These units have been purchased at a cost of \$1,800.

The second hazard is that one of the 25 sea water inlet pipes below the waterline may freeze and break. This will be remedied by installing one 5kw 440volt electric hot water heater in each of the four main machinery spaces to keep the temperature above freezing. Our volunteers have also placed plywood covers over all the ventilation openings to keep cold air from blowing into the machinery spaces. In the future these will be replaced with hinged steel covers.

The third hazard is that large fast moving ice flows may pierce the hull in the spring. Ice flows occur some years and not in other years. If there is going to be a potentially threatening ice flow, we will have 24 hours warning to prepare and protect the ship. The answer to this will be to keep a larger vessel moored upstream of the SLATER, lay a telephone pole boom around the forward part of SLATER'S hull, or move her to a more sheltered location in the river. However, the proposed location just south of the Dunn Memorial Bridge is thought to offer good protection against flowing ice, with the west bridge pier just ahead of the ship. However, these ships have steamed through a lot of pack ice in their day.

Plans are moving along to relocate the SLATER to the Snow Dock in the spring. The Albany Police dive team lead by Lt. Steve Stella checked out the proposed area off the Snow Dock. They reported no obstructions, smooth mud bottom, and feel that if we can hold the ship twenty to thirty feet out we will be in good shape. The Office of General Services has been a great deal of help in coordinating and mapping this area. Martin Davis has identified several large camels located at the former navy base on Staten Island that have been turned over to the City of New York. We will check to see if these are suitable and then work towards their acquisition. We are having monthly meetings with the Department of Transportation, Office of General Services, the Corps of Engineers and Coastal Resource Management to move the permitting processes along. DOT was kind enough to donate their engineering services to draw up a mooring plan and design for the bollards on the Snow Dock. The initial plan is to install nine bollards and moor the ship with doubled line. This may later be beefed up with cable. At the present time it is planned that the Albany Public Works department can dig the holes and set the bollards in place. We will have to bear the costs of purchase of the @ 72 cu ft yards of concrete and the fabrication of the nine steel bollards. Other costs we will incur at this location will be towing, the acquisition and movement of camels, the electrical hook up, sewer and water.

The City has applied for a grant from the New York State Department of State, Waterfront Revitalization, for the improvements to the park, installation of bollards, utility hookups, etc. We have heard that the grant is highly ranked, and hope to have definite word soon on this.

Now that I am back permanently we are getting the volunteer program cranked up to involve all thirty people who have submitted volunteer applications. We are scheduling volunteer days for Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sunday afternoons. We will increase the number of days as we develop volunteer leadership and I can hopefully devote less time to administration and more time to the ship. Until we get power aboard we are limited to cleaning electrical systems in preparation for power, cleaning compartments and sorting the gear we have found aboard the ship, and closing the ventilation openings in preparation for cold weather. When we get power, we will begin serious scaling and repainting in the main deck passageway. I cannot say enough for the eight volunteers who have taken care of the ship in my absence. We are now considering

opening the ship to limited visitation Sunday afternoons in late February. Kevin Lynch is working on completion of the docent training materials, and we will be planning to organize our tour guides and begin training at the beginning of February. We look forward to seeing you aboard.