

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER'S Volunteers

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As the outside painting season rushes to a close the deck force is frantically trying to complete as much topside painting as we can. We hope to continue until November 15th then move inside for the winter.

The Big Grant Came Through!! The New York State Division of Parks and Recreation awarded *Slater* a \$90,000. Grant to paint the hull above the water line. This is our first major recognition at the State level. A meeting will be held in early November to outline the Grant Guidelines for recipients. We plan to bid the project according to State Guidelines to do the work next April and May. We had hoped To do it this fall but time got away from us, and old man Winter is coming. However, don't you guys (& gals) put away your wallets and checkbooks yet as we'll still need your help to make it through the winter. The State Grant is project specific and cannot be used for general operating expenses. As we understand it, we must submit invoices to the State for reimbursement of payment. It's not like they hand us a check and say "go have a ball"! There are a few rules to follow, but getting the sides painted will really make *Slater* look shipshape. Contracting the work will enable **Raf, Les, Chris, Dick, Dutch** and the rest of the deck force free to concentrate their efforts elsewhere. Thanks to all of you in the State Legislature, City and elsewhere who helped us get the grant. And a big hug to **Lynn Shanno** for all that last minute typing and for creating order out of chaos.

Win One, Lose One- At the same time, our application for a \$30,000. Maritime Heritage Grant from the US Department of the Interior was rejected. We were told we had an excellent application, so it was probably our naivete in not mobilizing our political friends in support of the grant. We won't make that mistake again. Don't worry, the second deck forward will still be restored, but by the volunteers who need to divide their time among several projects; so it will be done at a slower pace.

On 3 October 1998, The North Pacific (NORPAC) Chapter of DESA held a gala banquet dinner to commemorate NORPAC's 15th Year anniversary as a Chapter. **Sumner Bray**, President of DESA, recently challenged DESA membership to contribute funds to support the effort led by **Sam Saylor**, President of DEHF, towards the restoration of the *Slater* to her 1945 condition. **John Bess**, Skipper of NORPAC-DESA accepted Bray's challenge and asked the membership what they wanted to do for the *Slater*. The response was loud and clear "We aren't in Albany where we can chip down to bare metal, repaint weld or repair machinery, but we will contribute to the efforts of the volunteers who accomplish these tasks." During the evening **Bess and Jack Yusen**, Board Member and MC presented a 2 feet by 3 feet check for \$1,800 towards the *Slater's* restoration to **Sumner Bray** who then handed it to **Sam Saylor** who thanked the assembled members and their wives for their tremendous gesture of support. This check is now being displayed aboard the ship in the Wardroom for all to admire. A sincere thanks to everyone at NORPAC for this special vote of confidence in our efforts ! You can be sure we'll make the most of every cent of your contribution.

We also got a big boost from the Michigan Chapter of DESA.

Six of their members: **Dick Breil** (DE 255), **John Bartko** (DE 330), **Merritt Hanchett** (DE 147), **Chuck Markham** (DE 183&186), **Rush Mellinger** (DE 147) and **Ron Zarem** (DE 148) made good on their promise and came east to spend a week restoring *Slater*. They chipped and primed all the forward stanchions, painted out the underside of gun tub 24, chipped and sanded all the midships 20 mm guns and painted all the gun tubs 24, 26, 42 and 33 as well as the port K guns and roller loaders. They also scaled down MK 51 directors 41 and 42 and the insides of the director tubs. We really wanted to keep these guys longer. They also served up some pretty good pancakes if you got aboard early enough.

Roy Gunther (DD-711) and **Don Norris** (USS Slater DE-766) made a recent pilgrimage to the reserve fleet in the James River, Virginia. They returned with electrical fittings, wardroom chairs, stateroom fittings and glasses and best of all- four ships clocks. **Frank Thompson** of the Naval Historical Center loaned us a bell for the ship. It's an authentic DE bell from the **USS Gentry DE 349**. So you guys from the **Gentry** now have a piece of your history preserved aboard. (**Note:** the actual *Slater* bell that was restored by the NYC guys is in safekeeping aboard the ship to be used for special occasions.) Now that they know the lay of the land, **Roy & Don** are anxious to go back. So here's the plan- **Roy** is looking for six strong volunteers to go with him November 3-7. They will travel south Tuesday, Nov. 3rd, Election Day, then will work Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; rent and load a U-Haul Truck Friday and return Saturday. The requirements are a strong back and the ability to pay your own expenses. No souvenir hunters need apply! **Roy** has his eye on Balsa rafts (300 lbs. each), mattresses, bunk bottoms and a steam table for the messdeck. Interested volunteers should contact **Tim Rizzuto** at (518) 431-1943, on the double.

What's going on aboard- Briefly, after a three-month battle, the engineers finally pulled the cracked cylinder liner from the aft emergency diesel. **Tony Demitraszek** fabricated a puller that made the keel suck up and say ouch. It did the trick. Now can one of you folks find us a new Cleveland cylinder liner for a 268A?

The Electricians (otherwise known as the fuses) have the deck lights on a timer, lighting up the ship every night. They've also pulled out a lot of cable from the overheads and sorted and organized all their spare wire in Comp C-201L.

The Deck Crew has nearly completed work on the lifelines and is ready to install snaking. **Bob Callender (DE-103)**, **Ray Lammers (APD-81)**, and **Ken Kaskoun (CVE-108)** were joined by an eager volunteer, **Frank McMahon (DE-746)**. Frank showed up one Wednesday to see what was going on and was immediately put to work. He was a Gunners Mate 3/c so we have another knowledgeable DE veteran aboard the ship. **Dutch Hannman (DE-530)** finally got out of chipping overheads by doing the one thing that could get him a reprieve from that dirty job. He showed us he could weld.

The ship has continued to welcome aboard special guests. Former Slater Vet **Arthur Ley** visited with his wife in September. **Art** is another Plankowner who served as a SM 3/c until 1945. **Rafael Suarez** (DD-944) accompanied him about the ship but it sounds like Art was the tour-guide this time! Art compared his duties on the cold, wet bridge with fellow crewmember **Ceylon Russell** who was down in the nice warm engine room! **Bill Schiller** another former volunteer from NYC visited us on October 17th. Whenever you are in the Pilothouse, think of **Bill** because this is where he left his mark. He worked on the restoration there to convert it from a blackened, misused area to its 1945 condition. Although Bill never served in the Navy because of eye problems, his brother was a submariner aboard the **USS Bonefish** which was lost off the coast of Japan on 14 July 1945. He is now volunteering in the South Street Seaport in NYC but says his heart is still with the *Slater*!

We have several specialized maintenance jobs available. We need someone with an electrical background who likes detailed restoration to disassemble, strip, repaint and reassemble the battered electrical box covers around the ship; topside and below. We need someone who is familiar with shipboard labeling and operation of an engraving machine to begin making bakelite tags for our electrical boxes and compartments. We also have a pile of condition tags and compartment label tags that need to be inventoried so that the useable ones can be remounted. We need a storekeeper to sort our fasteners in the room we call "nut and bolt hell" and to keep our tools straight. **Dave Meyersburg** is looking for people with collection management experience to help catalog our artifacts.

Nancy is always looking for tour-guides. Please let her know the days you guides are available. It's so hard to see such a nice girl chewing on her white knuckles at five minutes to eleven, fearful that no guides will show up. Give her a break and let her know when you're coming.

And, finally, Tim Rizzuto wants more paint chippers, welders and electricians. The volunteers are a great group of people and you won't regret getting involved.

A note to the crew from our friends at Niagara Mohawk. When we were on the generator we were paying \$200 a month for diesel fuel. We estimated our electric bill would be \$500 a month so we budgeted for that. **Barry Witte (LCDR, USNR)** lectured us all about turning lights out. We were careful. Our first bill came in at \$800, without using any electrical heaters. Get the message. Turn Out The Lights.

For those of you who enjoy meetings, our Board meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday every month at 8 am in the Wardroom. Since we all have jobs, **Frank Lasch**, our local Board leader never lets them go beyond 9 am. **All volunteers should feel free to attend and get involved.** Your ideas and suggestions for the restoration and support of the ship are very important to the success of the project.

The Plan for Winter is firming up. We will be moving back to the Port between November 15th and December 1st. We are again counting on the support of the NYS Department of Transportation, The Canal Corps and the Albany Water Department to help us pull this together. The camels will be hoisted ashore at the snow dock. We hope to remain open for tours Friday to Sunday at the Port, weather permitting, to retain some earned income through the winter. Thursday will become a maintenance day. We have an ambitious interior work schedule planned for this winter. We have already cleaned the aft washroom so we can set up the gift shop in there for the winter so **Annette, Betty, Nancy and Pat** won't freeze to death. The hope is before we know it, spring will arrive and we'll be saying "winter went by so fast, we hardly got anything done."

Dream on