



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**Albany, Season Fourteen.** We managed to have the ship all cleaned up and ready for our opening day on Wednesday, April 6th. April's tours started off with a bang, and it's still going! The new interns are keeping pace with the experienced tour guides because of their hard work, attention to detail, and guidance from the entire SLATER crew. The four interning tour guides who returned to the SLATER for a second season are **Rob Nielsen, Julianne Madsen, Penny Hutton, and Mike Paulmeno**; the new interns joining them are **Vince Knuth, Maximilian Dumicich, Patrick Whitford, Meaghan Morrison, and Matt Tolman**. This year's full crew includes veterans **Leo Baehler, Les Beauchaine, Bob Bull, Joe Burke, Bob Dawson, Russ Ferrer, Alan Fox, Mark Gardiner, Paul Guarneri, Grant Hack, Glenn Harrison, Ken Kaskoun, Jim Kuba, Chris Lecce, Steve Long, Jack Madden, Herb Marlow, Chuck Marshall, Tom McLaughlin, Dennis Nagi, Nelson Potter, Bill Scharoun, and Chuck Teal**. As it was last year, our overnight camping program is proving popular with bookings ahead of last year. Organized youth groups ranging in size from 20-50 campers come onboard and learn about the life of a sailor during World War II. The new interns are fast becoming the "regular crew" as they have quickly jumped into the fun in working with the campers. Our first camping experience for the 2011 season hosted 47 overnights from the Girl Scouts. Penny and Meaghan learned the ropes from our returning tour guide Joe Delberta. Not to be outdone by the girls, a group of Cub Scouts slept onboard the very next night. Thanks to volunteers "Stretch" McLaughlin, Grant Hack and Paul Guarneri for supervising the activities that night. We also had our first reunion of the season. Over forty members of the crew of the FORREST SHERMAN class destroyer USS MULLINNIX were aboard for a reunion on April 29th. Our crew welcomed them in SLATER style with the full color guard, music and a 3"/50 gun salute.

**The planning for our victory garden, Nora's Garden, named in honor of Frank Slater's mom, is well underway.** Master Gardener **Dolores Ferrer** is heading up the all-organic garden. She and **Carol Smith** have put together a selection of vegetables and flowers for planting in May. Dolores assures us that she has a good source of llama poop, a very good natural product for fertilizer. This year's compost pile also has grown along with our experience with this sort of thing. Restoration volunteer **Karl Herchenroder** donated an old push lawn mower for display at the garden so people can see how lawns were maintained before the days of power mowers. And the rhubarb has already starting coming up from last year's crop.



**Nora's garden with some of last years crop regrowing. Spring planting will occur in a few days.**

**Our new Collections Manager (as in artifacts, not debt) Heather Maron has been settling in.** After a month of being full time on board SLATER, she's already learned several things. For example, several extra layers of clothes will help you be more productive, even if it's warm out, and there are, in fact, several ways to shut and lock any particular hatch, door, or locker. She has been busy researching individual ships for interested families and assisting with the National Historic Landmark designation for SLATER, which we hope to gain shortly. We will make our presentation in

Washington on May 24<sup>th</sup>. She was well-

trained by her predecessor, **Katie Kuhl**, and everyone has made such an effort to make the transition as positive as possible. She says that despite spending the last two years in graduate school for Public History with a focus on preservation and museum work, nothing has taught her as much as her experience on board SLATER, with such an amazing and dedicated crew.

Doug Tanner, who was back in Kansas, his crew continued without their leader. Along the portside main deck passageway **Tim Benner, Gene Jackey, Dave Mardon, Clark Farnsworth and Chuck Teal** wrapped up the repairs to the main deckhouse. Clark fabricated all the fan room drains and Gene fabricated expanded metal gratings for the fan intakes a deck above. They even got Joe Delberta into the act who has decided it is time to learn a trade and is picking up welding tips from the old hands.

**Up in the radio room the big news is that the radio gang completed all the TBL transmitter wiring and has done their initial tests.** They completed coupling the motor generator set together and on the first test run it blew the 440 line fuses before the set even got up to speed. The fuses were 15 amp, so Barry put in 25 amp fuses. Then the M/G came up to speed and sounded good; it is really fairly quiet. All the lights came on and the filaments lit except the oscillator 860 filament did not light initially. They exercised the MF/HF transmitter change-over switch a few times and the oscillator filament came on, but then the 2ND IPA 860 filament was out. Up and down with the change-over switch a few more times and all the filaments were on. The various voltages were within reason and the step 1 and step 2 tune up was OK. We were on the old WWII Navy frequency 3262 KCs and had 5 amps RF antenna current which is right in the ball park. The hand-held fluorescent tube lights impressively as we expected. Needless to say **Tom Horsfall** was quite pleased to hear the good news. He extended his congratulations to **Joe Breyer, Mike Wyles, Bob Kibbey, Jerry Jones and Barry Witte** for a job well done. Of course, without Tom's "Homeric" efforts this would not have happened. By the way, we believe that so far as we know, this is the only RCA TBL left in the world. All of the HNSA museum ship TBLs are Westinghouse models. The guys will be going on the air with the unit soon, and if you want to talk to them, you better know code.



**Midshipman Liz Church has been leading the RPI NROTC effort this semester.**

"Boat's" Haggart has been keeping the mooring lines tight and the anchor windlass room squared away. Jim Gelston continues to keep the clocks wound. Gary Sheedy continues his amazingly detailed restoration of the reefer deck. Larry Williams and Ken Kaskoun have been working on battle lanterns in the machinery spaces in addition to giving tours. Frank Peter and Paul Czesak have been scanning photographs and slides for our archives. Midshipman Liz Church has continued to bring groups of RPI Midshipmen aboard to help with the restoration, give a hand on the messdecks and learn from the old timers.  
winter.



**The spring Michigan crew pose with our Monday volunteers.**

**The gang made what may be our last run to the James River Reserve Fleet for parts. The old ships are all gone. Gordon Lattey, Barry Witte, Bill Wetterau, Dave Mardon, Greg Krawczyk and Mike Fitzgibbon** spent two days hauling consumables off three modern Cape Class cargo ships that are slated for disposal. They came back with a lot of galley gear, line, rigging gear, a log desk for sickbay, valves, engineering spares and light bulbs. The real prize parts were spare modules for our alarm system and a big electric heater to use in aft steering when we restore that space next

**The Michigan gang began arriving on Saturday April 30<sup>th</sup>. Ron Zarem** and his son **Mark** did the traditional turkey dinner with all the fixings on Sunday night. I should say all the fixings but one. The crew quietly grumbled about the lack of cranberry sauce, and by the time the meal was over the grumbling was loud enough that Mark finally heard it and remembered that he had opened two number ten cans of cranberry sauce but had forgotten to bring them down from the galley.



**Chief Smith kept the crew well fed.**



**The second oldest guy in the crew, Jim Ray, showed age isn't slowing him down.**

**The key to any successful work week is having a great crew in the galley.** With the loss of **Tom Schriner**, **Chief Smith** stepped in to fill the billet as chief commissaryman with an assist from **Bob Kibbey**, even though our Air Force Vet was dismayed at how early the Navy starts working in the morning. **Larry Stiles** and **Ron Orsak** rounded out the crew of messmen, and former SLATER motormac **Bill Svihovic** took care of compartment and head cleaning.



**Roy Brandon, Doug Tanner, Laird Confer and Jim Ray repairing the coaming on the 40mm gun tub.**



**Ron Mazure leads the deck chippers.**

**One of the biggest eyesores on the ship was the portside 40mm gun tub for gun 42, right above the gangway.** We decided it was time to repaint the tub. But, of course, there was more to it than that, as the coaming was rotted out and there were holes in the tub itself. With an assist from **Doug Tanner, Laird Confer, Roy Brandon** and **Jim Ray** first fabricated supports and a scaffold hanging over the side so the face of the tub could be accessed for repair. Then all the wasted metal was cut and ground away. Doug had a new piece of coaming fabricated at American Boiler, who donated the bending. The new coaming was welded into place, and patches inserted in the face of the tub where the steel had rotted through. While Doug and Laird were working on the gun tub, our own pro welding team of Tim Benner and Dave Mardon decided to weld down number six depth charge roller loader and the davit that supports the awning on the forward portside to the deck.



**Bernie Wright, Jim Ray and Gary Headworth helped tend the side painters float.**



**Mike and Pat Zarem prepping the inside of the gun 42 tub for painting.**

**About half an hour after starting they were nowhere to be seen and I noticed the fantail hatch open.** I went down into the collections space and there they were, ripping all the fiberglass insulation board from the overhead. Paint chips and debris everywhere. No drop cloth, nothing covering the painting or the uniforms or the cases. I politely suggested that they might want to move some of the uniforms and put a drop cloth over the display cases. I don't know why Dave spent the rest of the day insisting that I apologize to him and Benner for not treating them with the proper respect. I'm just glad Katie wasn't there.

**The paint crew consisted of Ron Zarem and Ron's sons Mark, Mike and Pat,** as well as Ron's "illegitimate" son **Scott McFadden.** These guys prepped, primed and painted all three 40mm gun tubs inside and out, as well as the exterior of the amidships starboard side 20mm tubs and the starboard side flagbags. In the meantime, Mark found time to overhaul all the needle guns, and Mike found time to do some insulation repair work in C-203L and the machinery spaces. The "illegitimate" son helped Rocky on the whaleboat and assisted Mark with the insulation work.



**Laird Confer's grandsons Josh and Jared Maurer scaling the starboard boottop.**

**On the main deck, the scaling of the portside continued unabated. Last month Ron Mazure, Don Miller, Walt Stuart, Chris Fedden, and Bill Wetterau began the scaling as soon as the weather got warm enough. They were about half done with the project when Michigan showed up. Emmett Landrum (The oldest guy in the crew), Bernie Wright, and John Adriani chipped relentlessly and actually completed all the scaling and corrosealing as far aft as the roller loaders. Pat Zarem even lent a hand when it rained too hard to paint. By the time they left, the deck was ready for painting. Down on the water Gary Dieckman supervised Laird Confer's grandsons Josh Maurer and Jared Maurer working off the paint float to scale the starboard boottop.** If you recall, last summer we did all the freeboard haze gray but the boottop was pretty rough. Gary has been working with these kids for three years now and he hasn't lost one overboard yet. The kids are some of the best workers on the ship and got as far as amidships by the end of the week, leaving us to finish on our own. When it got too wet for them to paint, they went down into the bowels of B-4 and continued painting the bilges.

**Gus Negus is up and running with us again following the installation of his pacemaker.** He's been working on the lower level of B-3 continuing the touch up painting on the ship's service generator. Over on the starboard side of the same space, **Karl and Earl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano and Mike Dingmon** have been scaling the two main propulsion diesels, a project Rocky started last winter, but left as soon as it got warm enough to work on the whaleboat.



**Up on the flying bridge Dick Walker and Gary Headworth worked with first timer Dean Pryers to replace the glass and gaskets in the MK29 gunsight on the 52 director.** Dean played a critical role as he is the son of a DE sailor and a lot younger than either Dick or Gary. In fact, Dean's father was a fire controlman on the USS JAMES E. CRAIG DE201, so he was definitely in the right place to learn about what his father experienced.

Finally, Jim Parker, Butch Warrender and Guy Huse worked electrical and mechanical projects. Jim and Butch worked together on the messdecks scuttlebutt. They installed a new drain line and got the existing unit all plumbed in and ready to go, but the compressor was shot. They went back aft and found another scuttlebutt we had pulled off the old USS SPHINX ARL24. I thought that one was a basket case because it had been submerged at one point aboard SPHINX during an engineroom flood, but the guys cleaned it, tested it and powered it up and it worked fine. It now sits on the SLATER's messdeck as a functioning unit. Down below in B-4, **Guy Huse** continued his epic saga with the aft fire and flushing pump. He now has the advantage of having the tech manual for that specific piece of gear, found in the seventy pounds of manuals recently donated to us by **Merchant Vessel Machinery Replacement Inc.** in Wilmington, California by **Vern Richardson** and his son **Eric**. The saga continues.

**Of course, with Michigan, the big event is the competition to see who can be "Tim's "Favorite."** The locals remain bewildered by this competition, and wonder why anybody would care. But the guys from Michigan do, and, as always, the competition was stiff. Without going down the whole list, the runner up was **Bernie Wright** simply because he was the first one to get his needle gun going Monday morning. But this year the prize has to go to **Jim Parker** for installing **Barry Witte's** "Basket case" scuttlebutt on the messdecks. Larry Williams has been talking about doing it for 14 years, but Jim did it in four days. Admittedly, he was ably assisted by **Butch Warrender**, and Butch's day will come. But this is Jim's year. Congratulations Jim. Have a cold drink of water on us.

**Our Friends on the USS STEWART down in Galveston asked us for a hand. Mac Christy**, head of the Edsall Class Veterans Association is looking for Gunners Mates to work on the 3"/ 50s and 40mm guns on the STEWART down in Galveston TX. They want to repair these guns to the point that they can be trained and elevated manually.

The guns of the USS STEWART are of great interest to the thousands of people who tour her each year. We can attest to that. If you live in the southwest and are interested in helping out, contact Mac at 785-255-4368



See you next month

**We lost two more friends and shipmates this quarter. Earl Gillette** was one of the original Manhattan volunteers who continued to drive over from Connecticut after the SLATER came to Albany. He also participated in the Michigan field days and chipped paint alongside **Dick Smith**. Earl had served aboard the USS WILLIAM SEIVERLING in WWII and was called back for Korea. He retired as a meteorologist with the National Weather Service after 41 years of service, and maintained a cooperative weather station for 43 years at his home in Woodbury. He and his wife of 57 years, Eleanor, had lost a son, Evan, in the 9/11 World Trade Center tragedy. Our deepest condolences go out to Eleanor and his son, Earl Frederic Gillette and wife, Cynthia, of Woodbury, and his two granddaughters, Katie and Maggie Gillette.

**Tom Schriener of the USS WALTON DE361 died Thursday, April 21, 2011, at his home in Big Rapids, Michigan after a year-long battle with cancer.** Tom was one of my favorite members of the Michigan crew. A talented mechanic, welder and cook, Tom and his son Joe had been faithful attendees of our Michigan Work Weeks since the beginning. Tom started out as a welder mechanic and the bits he and son Joe fabricated for the aft spring line will serve as a monument to him. It broke my heart when he went into the galley to do the cooking for the crew. The multitalented Tom was in the running almost every year for the coveted title of “Tim’s Favorite.” And he was never vindictive when he didn’t get the award, except maybe the time he fed the rest of the crew roast turkey with all the fixings and gave me an old peanut butter sandwich. His talent and humor will be missed.