



## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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Vol. 17 No. 11, November 2014

**Two major events marked the month of November.** The first was our annual fundraiser, USS SLATER Night at the Fort Orange Club in Albany, and the second was our annual Veterans Day Observance.

**This year's Ft. Orange Club event focused on celebrating our most successful year to date, as we completed the Hull Fund Drive and the successful drydocking within the funds allocated.** Its roots go back to 2005, when it was started by Admiral **Paul Czesak, Doris Fischer, and Geoffrey Bullard.** Originally conceived as a "dining out" event, it has evolved to a high-end cocktail party. We were touched by the presence of former Mayor **Jerry Jennings**, the man who brought USS SLATER to Albany, along with other dignitaries.



Guests at the 2014 Fundraiser at the Fort Orange Club.

**The night, done in the traditional Ft. Orange Club style, featured h'ors d'oeuvres, music, and drink, with an open bar and wonderful company.** As we have done each year, the West Main Lounge was decorated with nautical antiques and graphics from the Museum collection to add a Naval flair to the event. We were especially honored to have Trustee **John Cosgrove** and **Georgia Jones** with us, who came all the way up from Washington. John was one of the founders of the Museum and served on USS GENDREAU DE-639. After an hour of socializing, Board Chairman **BJ Costello** led everyone up to the President's Room, where **Ed Zajkowski** and I presented our "Extreme Makeover, Shipyard Edition" or "How we spent your 1.4 million dollars" to the guests. We had previously presented the program at the DESA Convention in Warwick, RI and the Historic Naval Ships Conference in Norfolk, VA.

**The session covered all aspects of USS SLATER's 2014, 12-week overhaul. Also included was the fundraising effort, the preparations, the weather delays, shipyard background, development of the work package, towing, surveys, surface preparation, and coatings, steel work, sea chest issues, cathodic protection, fleeting, leak checking, topside work and the application of camouflage. We used about 140 images to tell the story. We placed a lot of emphasis on the compromises we had to make, the mistakes we made, and the lessons we learned.**

**At the conclusion of the program, Board President Tony Esposito took the podium to present the “Trustees Award for Outstanding Service” to Ed Zajkowski. This meant a lot to me personally, as Ed and I teamed up in the beginning to help organize the first USS JOSEPH. P. KENNEDY JR. field day back in 1978, believed to be the first destroyer volunteer field day held anywhere. Since then we have maintained a friendship based on a love of destroyers that has spanned three ships, KENNEDY, KIDD, and now SLATER. Wherever I have landed, Ed has been standing by to provide whatever technical assistance I have needed.**

**Ed was working for Philadelphia Electric Company back in the seventies, when the mass scrapping of the World War II ships was taking place right in his backyard. Aware of the future value of all the documents that were being destroyed, Ed and two associates made it their mission to save as much of the paperwork on these ships as they could. This was back in the day when a six-pack could buy you a station wagon full of blueprints and tech manuals. The ships were going for scrap with all their paperwork aboard, and to the scrappers it was just a fire hazard. Over the years, Ed has donated a significant amount of documentation to the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum to improve our ability to maintain USS SLATER. When the need to drydock SLATER became apparent a year ago, Ed willingly shared his knowledge and resources with us to help us plan and prepare. He led a group internet discussion in which he played “devil’s advocate” with the SLATER’s hull preservation committee, to identify potential problems and determine the best course of action for the Museum to pursue.**

**His commitment to the process became apparent when he put his personal life completely on hold, to serve as my project manager for the overhaul. He arrived at the shipyard hours before SLATER, with a carload of blueprints, tech manuals, bedding and his toilet kit. He remained aboard the ship for the entire overhaul period, going home one day in twelve to do laundry and chores. He even did my laundry. Other than that, his entire life revolved around SLATER. He supervised projects, coordinated the volunteer effort, and suggested improvements in the process, never asking for a penny in payment for his services. He even took the weekend duty so the paid guy could go home to his wife.**



**Recipient of the 2014 Trustees Award for Outstanding Service, Ed Zajkowski.**

**His commitment was further demonstrated by his assumption of the role of chief cook and commissary steward. He planned the menu, did the shopping, and cooked all of the meals, to keep the volunteers happy during the yard period. He even discovered that Tuesday was senior discount day at the supermarket, and kept the grocery bills so reasonable that even Rosehn was happy. On top of all of his other talents, Ed is an extraordinary chef. Ed referred to his time aboard SLATER as his**



last great adventure, but we all like to think he has more excitement over the horizon.

**Ed has a collection of destroyer artifacts that includes everything from throttle wheels to a ship's bell.** He fondly recalls the day, back in the seventies, when he was offered a set of torpedo tubes. He had to decline the offer. Yet, somehow a ship's clock had always eluded him. So the plaque we gave him included that one artifact that he had never been able to acquire. The event raised \$20,000 for the Museum, and was another success, as SLATER closes the year of our greatest achievements.



Veterans Day 2014 aboard USS SLATER.

**Our next event followed on Tuesday, November 11, when we commemorated Veterans Day aboard USS SLATER.** The ceremonial detail mustered at 0830, as **Jerry Jones** played a medley of Armed Forces music over the 1MC. At 0900, **Chairman Costello** opened the ceremony, and **Ken Kaskoun** ordered the color guard to parade the colors. Following the National Anthem, President **Tony Esposito** led the invocation. Then BJ welcomed our invited dignitaries, including **Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan** and **Assemblymembers Pat Fahy** and **John McDonald**.

**Following the tributes by our civic leaders, BJ unveiled the National Landmark plaque that had been previously installed on the quarterdeck earlier in the week by Doug Tanner.** BJ read the words on the plaque to the audience: "This site possesses National Significance in commemorating the history of the United States of America. Destroyer Escorts defended vital convoys during World War II.

Mass-produced between 1943-45, 563 were launched, giving the U.S. Navy strategic strength in anti-submarine warfare. Swift and maneuverable, these ships performed diverse roles into the Vietnam era. USS SLATER is the best-preserved example in the world. National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. Designated 2012."

**At this point, Erik Collin and the RPI Midshipmen fired a three-shot memorial volley, and Garrett Aldershoff, Jr. rendered taps, followed by the Navy Hymn.** Tony ended with the benediction, the colors were retired, and the ceremony concluded. A Youtube video on the service was shared 82 times, close to a record for us. What followed was one of our busiest days of the season, and we thank all who participated in our tribute and came to visit the ship

**November also saw an effort to wrap up our outside projects and prepare for winter.** Once again, **Rick and John Scarano** came to our aid. With the davit still under

repair, bringing the boat aboard was not an option. So the decision was made to send the whaleboat back to Scarano Brother's Boatyard for the winter lay up. Thus, on Monday, 3 November, **Larry Williams, Ken Myrick, and Mike Dingmon** cast off for the last time. They took the boat south. **Rocky and Eric** met them down at the boatyard, and the boat was hauled, cleaned, and stored inside for the winter. Rocky already has several repair projects lined up.



The last whaleboat run of the season.



Super Dave Mardon installing new bolts on the davit pedestal.

**Doug Tanner made it down to supervise the drain down of the fresh water system.** But, in his absence for most of the month, the work on the davit fell to **Tim Benner, Super Dave Mardon, Clark Farnsworth, and Earl Herchenroder.** By the end of the month, the welding on the pedestal was complete, and new bolts had been installed all the way around. Now the only issue is rebuilding the bulwark, and that may drag on until spring, as we're running out of good outside days. In another davit-related issue, we discovered that the wooden whaleboat blocks have deteriorated and need to be rebuilt. **Boats Haggart** and his intrepid crew of **Walt Stuart, Thomas Scian, Paul Guarnieri,** and new volunteers **Kenny Skarrup and Bill Holt,** removed the blocks from the davits. Plans are for **Bill Wetterau** to rebuild them this winter. Boats and his crew also got the accommodation ladder hoisted. They did an amazing job, stowing spare parts in B-2 on the new shelving that **Tommy Moore** built. We also took advantage of the extra storage space we created onboard by consolidating our storeroom, and moved all the artifacts we had stored in the U-Haul building back to the ship. That will save us \$150 a month. It all adds up.

**Meanwhile, another can of worms opened up in the crawl space under the gun three tub.** Designated on the blueprints as the "Landing Force Equipment Locker," water has been seeping into this unventilated space through the cables going up to the gun mount. The deck and overhead in compartments C-202L and C-203 L is rotted out in several places. **Thomas Scian, Paul Guarnieri,** and new volunteer **Justin Endriss** got the place pretty well scaled out. They were in the process of applying Corro Seal rust inhibitor when the cold weather set in. Doug Tanner has been studying the problem, and has plans to get in there and make the necessary repairs this winter.





Work continues on the B-3 fire and flushing pump.



The deck gang breaking down the temporary supports on the aft davit.

**Gary Sheedy continues to make progress in aft steering, aided by his dedicated chippers, Ron Mazure, Bill Wetterau, and Ron Prest.** Ron and Bill have amazed us all with their willingness to tackle the overheads, a job nobody likes. Our engineers, **Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon, and Ken Myrick,** have completed the plumbing for the cooling to the aft ship's service generator in B-3. Unfortunately, it's too late in the season to test it, as we don't want to introduce fresh water into the system with the onset of winter. They have now turned their attention to rebuilding the sound-powered phone booth on the lower lever of B-3, and the main propulsion diesel instrument panels. Away from the whaleboat, **Rocky Rockwood** has joined them to continue chipping paint.

**Barry Witte has continued to make progress with the B-3 fire and bilge piping, and is teaching a lot of youngsters a great deal about how to overhaul piping systems in the process.** Working with a mix of RPI Midshipmen, and student engineers, **Joshua Blake, Carlos Rodriguez, Eric Brovarone, Matt Gerrard, Lisa Brown, Troy Violette, Jackson Lyons, Abigail Agosto, Matt Munson, Jeff Pistacchio, Tommy Moore, Tulsa Scott, and Matt Clifford,** they are drilling, tapping, threading, cutting gaskets, and rigging heavy sections of the system in and out of the engine room. In a very real sense, Barry's utilization of USS SLATER to teach practical machinery skills to the next generation of engineers is where our relic of the past lives up to her full potential as an educational platform. Barry has been strongly supported by machinist **George Christophersen,** who has been machining new valve stems and parts to replace worn fittings. It is truly an intergenerational collaborative effort.



RM1 Joe Breyer making our first contacts with the TBL radio transmitter.

**For those who may not know - SLATER has its own amateur radio license WW2DEM.** Our intrepid radiomen, **Jerry Jones, Joe Breyer, Mike Wyles and Stan Levandowski** are all licensed amateur radio operators (Hams). They can put SLATER "on the air" to give hams all around the world the opportunity to make contact with our historic ship and receive a QSL or "confirmation of contact" card for

their scrapbooks. Some of these contacts are made with our vintage TBL transmitter and RBC receiver. Joe Breyer and Mike Wyles made the first contacts and spent the last two Saturdays making Morse code contacts with this original Navy gear and they report that the equipment works fine. Joe even brought in his original high speed telegraph key and headphones from his active duty days.

**Of course, it's not 1945 anymore and this vintage gear is no longer appropriate for everyday use on today's crowded ham frequencies.** So the radio crew installed a modern 100-watt station for routine use. Unfortunately, after a short time in use, this modern solid state equipment failed and had to be returned for repairs. The radiomen determined that SLATER's maritime antennas were reflecting some of the transmitted power back to the solid state equipment and causing it to fail - something that was of no concern seventy years ago in the vacuum tube era. **Stan Levandowski** ran some tests to determine a fix and he has parts on order that will eliminate the problem and return WW2DEM to active duty.



**Saturday chow call on the messdeck.**

**Chief Smith continues to keep the crew fed on Mondays and Saturdays. Jim Gelston** does the cleanup on the messdecks, and keeps the clocks wound. **Chris Fedden and Dick Walker** still do the supply runs, and **Chris** keeps it all organized in the store room and the machine shop. **Angelo Bracco** has made sure that all the gunsights and gun directors have covers for the winter. **Guy Huse** continues his work in B-4. And **Claire Oesterreich** is aboard every other Saturday with dust rag in hand, and keeps the wardroom silver polished. Our Slater Angel has come back in a huge way,

volunteering to underwrite the cost of the calendars in memory of her late husband **Roger**. **Roger** served aboard USS LOESER and volunteered with us in the early days when SLATER didn't look like she was worth saving. We thank you **Claire**.

**With the coming of winter, you all know you can expect our annual Winter Fund solicitation next month. In the meantime, think about other ways to help the Museum.** We're coming up on the end of the year, which means you may be looking over your tax situation. If you're considering increasing your charitable contributions for 2014, please consider USS SLATER. There are ways to give that may decrease your tax burden. Check with your financial advisor. Charitable giving, accomplished with appreciated securities instead of cash, makes good sense and you could realize a potential income tax deduction based on the full current value of the asset.

**It may seem easier to simply write a check for charitable contributions than to deal with the assumed-to-be-complex details of making gifts of appreciated assets, plus deciding which assets are most appropriate to include.** In fact, it is very easy to make gifts of appreciated securities, and the Museum is willing to assist you in accomplishing your goals.





Our camouflage paint job receives its first covering of snow.

**If the securities to be gifted are stocks, bonds, or mutual fund shares, and are held by your broker, it is very easy for that firm to electronically deliver the assets directly to the brokerage account of DEHM.** If you hold certificates representing your ownership of the securities to be donated, we can help you through that transfer process, as well.

**As always, this information is not to be considered financial advice.** Consult with your financial advisor, accountant, or attorney, to determine the securities that are most appropriate for giving and that will have the desired tax effect.

**If you've decided that giving cash is best for you, consider a recurring donation.** Recurring donations are automatic contributions with a credit card once a month, quarterly, or can occur as frequently as you wish. It

is an efficient way to provide a predictable and steady source of income to support the operation and restoration of SLATER. You will save on postage and time, and may earn reward points by using your Visa, MasterCard, or Discover Card. You will receive an email confirmation for each recurring donation. For more information, please call Rosehn in the Museum office at 518-431-1943. Recurring donations may be made through PayPal as well.

**Another way of supporting the SLATER is through corporate matching gifts.**

Many businesses have programs to match gifts to charitable organizations that are made by their employees and retirees. Remember, DEHM is a 501(c)(3) organization and, in most cases, qualifies for matches. This is one program, however, that you must initiate. Contact your employer's human resources office and ask if your company matches employee donations. If they do, request a copy of the matching gift form. Review the program guidelines to determine if DEHM is eligible to receive matching gifts. If you have questions, call us. Complete the form and send it to DEHM. If your company does not currently match employee donations, ask it to do so. Some of the companies that have recently matched donations include **Bank of America, Boeing, Eli Lilly, General Electric, IBM, Illinois Tool Works, KeyBank, Pfizer, Rockwell Automation, and Verizon.**



**Finally, our Interpretation Coordinator Heather Maron writes, “With the end of the 2014 tour season, I am also announcing my departure from the Slater crew. In my past six seasons with the ship, the Slater volunteers and guides have undoubtedly become like family to me, without you I couldn't have**

**We're all going to miss Heather.**

done anything. I've seen most of you on a weekly basis throughout the season, and you've tolerated my last minute calls for help, my scheduling snafus, and my attempts at enforcing the one-hour tour. Some of you, like **Jack Madden and Bob Dawson**, are reliable faces since my first season with the ship. Others, like **Stan Levandowski, Chuck Boone, Tom Cline, and Don Cushman**, have joined our guiding force in the past few years, and I couldn't be more grateful for such outstanding additions that have fit in seamlessly and quickly.”

“**My faithful weekend help, Nelson Potter, Paul Guarnieri, Chuck Teal, Art Dott, Jim Kuba, and Grant Hack**, have been lifesavers over those long summer days filled with back-to-back tours. The week day regulars are just as important, the guides who keep themselves busy while waiting for the tours on cold winter days or hot summer afternoons: **Alan Fox, Dennis Nagi, and Ken Kaskoun**. Then, there are the select few brave enough to help with overnights on a regular basis, **Tom McLaughlin and Charlie Poltenson**. I will especially miss the opportunity to see the faces of those who couldn't come as often, **Bill Scharoun, Leo Baehler, and Les Beauchaine**. Collectively you have taught me to be a manager, to take criticism, and to be grateful that every day I was lucky enough to work in such an amazingly unique environment with people that became family.”

**Best of luck to you Heather. We're all going to miss you.**

**See you next month.**