



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The big event of the month was the dedication of the new Hudson River Way on August 10th. The River Way is a pedestrian overpass from downtown to enable pedestrians to walk over the highway and access the riverfront. The overpass is beautifully designed and the surrounding riverfront has been freshly landscaped to make it attractive to visitors. It will bring a lot more foot traffic to the river. Hopefully this will mean more visitors for the SLATER.

The dedication included bands, speakers, fireworks and at dusk, a lighted boat parade from the Albany yacht club. Participating in the regatta, for the first time, was our very own USS SLATER 26' motor whaleboat with our very own BM2 **Beth Spain** at the tiller. The whaleboat is now fully functional, and **Beth, Roy, and Rocky** baby it like a yacht. It is the pride of the SLATER. We keep it moored diagonally and access it from the Jacobs ladder on the fantail. Beth has gotten permission from the Coast Guard to carry up to six paying passengers. We thought this would be a nice touch for reunions, but again,



Getting the whaleboat ready for the Hudson River Way dedication.

insurance is the problem. The liability insurance would cost twenty five hundred dollars for the rest of the season, again, a little steep for our blood. **The floating highlight of the show was the return visit of the fireboat JOHN J HARVEY.** For a second year, **Huntley Gill, Tim Ivory** and her volunteer crew of this veteran warrior motored up the Hudson and lay alongside us for a weekend. This year's visit was especially significant. As you may recall, on September 11, 2001, right after the World Trade Center disaster, the volunteers of the HARVEY volunteered their help and services to the New York City Fire Department. The NYFD immediately accepted the services of the aging boat that they had discarded years before, and should have long ago been scrapped. The HARVEY spent three days tied up at the Battery, pumping river water to the firefighters ashore battling flames at ground zero. It was a heroic feat and a major contribution. I think all of us who care for historic ships would love to have the opportunity to be of such service again.

As a salute to the HARVEY's commitment, the Albany Fire Department planned a special tribute of their own. As the HARVEY approached Albany, the Albany Fire Department closed the south lane of the Dunn Memorial Bridge over the Hudson just ahead of SLATER's berth. They lined

the bridge with fire trucks and sprayed water down in salute of the HARVEY's service. HARVEY fired up her nozzles in return, and it was no contest. She soaked the firefighters on the bridge. In fact, it looked like she could have knocked the trucks off the bridge. One unnamed SALTER engineer was so awed by HARVEY's pumping capability that he remarked, "That's better than sex!" Only an engineer would make that comment. Others remarked that they should hire out to clean the undersides of bridges, her hydrants were that powerful. All the local media outlets covered the event. Following the salute, the HARVEY lay alongside the SLATER and took on visitors for an afternoon cruise to Troy. She departed at 1400 on Friday, and was back for 1600.



The Fireboat HARVEY at the Hudson River Way Dedication.



The HARVEY landing alongside the SLATER.

That evening the HARVEY crew put on a wonderful steak and seafood barbecue for the SLATER volunteers. We had a great get together that lasted late into the evening. The best part is that the HARVEY crew is allowed to have beer aboard, so it's always tough to keep some of our old timers from jumping ship. Jerry Jones and the Andrians made a special presentation to the HARVEY crew, as a little tribute from the SLATER

Back on September first, 2001, ten days before the World Trade Center disaster, **Jerry** and his wife had left New York harbor on a cruise ship. The HARVEY had come out to send them off with a water display, and Jerry had some beautiful images of the old boat with the Twin Towers in the background. Richard Andrian worked with Jerry to make large prints. They were put into an album that the whole SLATER crew signed. We are indebted to the HARVEY crew for a wonderful evening and some delicious steaks. The only ones who had any complaints were the usual ten percent who failed to get the word. Things must be pretty rough on the HARVEY accommodation wise, because we opened the SLATER's aft crew's quarters to the HARVEY volunteers for berthing, as well as the use of the showers. The following morning they were talking about the SLATER Hilton. Early on, painter and computer guru **Erik Collin** recognized the value of the HARVEY as a paint float. He mixed up some hull paint and spent the day touching up the rust streaks on the starboard side.



Ken Hannan Walter Roberge and the SWEARER crew present a painting of their ship to the SLATER Museum.

We had Walt Roberge and the USS SWEARER crew back aboard this month. This is their second time to Albany, and they were real impressed with our progress. One of their former skippers, **Ken Hannan**, was the guest of honor. The day before the reunion, he appeared at the office door aboard the ship. I invited him in to sit down so he could tell me tales of the SWEARER, and even more impressive, his days skippering a corvette, USS TENACITY, back in the dark days of 1942 when we weren't sure who was going to win. During the course of the conversation, it came out that he had strolled down from the Ramada Inn. Not a bad walk, about a half-mile, in ninety-four degree heat. **But then it came out Ken is ninety-two years old.** To me that was more impressive than his combat record. We had a nice presentation that Friday of a painting of the SWEARER at Okinawa for the SLATER museum. SWEARER stayed on the picket lines for the entire campaign, never getting a break for R&R. That was a tough detail. For the record, Ken refused several offers to be driven back to the hotel, choosing to walk.



Don and Ruthie Marlin. Nobody ever made the SLATER look better in just two weeks and Ruthie lets Don do it

Among the crew were Don and Ruthie Martin. They stayed on after the reunion to help out in the gift shop and with painting the SLATER. This was their third such visit, and they are workers. We turned **Don** loose with a power sprayer, and he sprayed out the entire 01 lever 20 and 40-millimeter guns, tubs, and the whole starboard deckhouse. He was amazing. I kind of found out a little about the price of my integrity from **Don and Ruthie**. My policy and the policy of the Board is to display the SLATER in as near as we can to original 1945 configuration. Thus, the policy in regard to donor recognition is to recognize our major donors off the ship leaving the ship with as few alterations as possible and minimal signage. Our plan for major donor recognition is to have a board in the visitors center that will contain the names of all individuals who donate \$2,000 or more and businesses that donate \$5,000 or more. That's one of the reasons the completion of the trailer is so important to us, as that will be where we recognize our contributors. Then **Don and Ruthie** came along. **Don** had a little brass tag that he wanted to hang on his bunk. Actually, it's not really his bunk. His bunk disappeared when they scrapped the USS SWEARER, but you know what we mean. **In her final role, SLATER is every DE to every DE sailor.** It broke our hearts to say no, that he couldn't put the tag on the bunk, as all the donor recognition will be done in the visitor center. Anyway, **Don and Ruthie still gave us a \$5,000 check to the endowment fund, and worked the two weeks to boot!**

Work continues as before. The trailer has completed phase one. **"Doc" Miner kept his promise and with helpers Dennis Nagi, Bill Coyle, Jim Fowler, and Paul Clow,** completed the exterior and the interior carpentry. We are indebted to **Crawford Door and Window, Allerdice Building Supply and Curtiss Lumber of Ballston Spa** for their contribution of donated building materials to the trailer project. The next phase is building the handicapped access ramp, the deck leading to the ship and fabricating a new gangway. Board member **Tom Owens** has arranged for **Home Depot** to donate five thousand dollar worth of building materials for the deck, so we hope to begin construction within the next couple of months. We thank all of you who spent so many hot days in that trailer.



The Kids in the gun gang play on mount three.

The gunners have finished all their repair work on gun 1, and repainted the mount and shield. Peter Schick did the shield. **Dave Floyd, Andy Desorbo, Frank Beeler, and Bob Lawrence** were heavily engaged in the process of trying

You might think it would be impossible to top all that we've told you so far, but there is even more. The most amazing event of the month, and probably the whole year. On Sunday, August 11, Doug Tanner returned the repaired fantail hatch and scuttle to its rightful location. For those of you who follow the SLATER saga faithfully, you have read that Doug removed this hatch for a rebuild back in April. The scope of the job continued to expand to the point where we didn't think it would ever get back to the fantail. It became as source of a lot of jokes and derisive comments. Doug said the more we laughed, the longer it would take. Well it's back, but fear not. It's not done.

We were standing around admiring it, when **Doug** came up and said he had to tweak it a little bit more. By the time he'd finished explaining what he meant by tweaking, we realized he'd be on the fantail until January. At least the canvas cover is gone off the fantail. And having her hatch back in the museum space has made **Pat Perrella** real happy!



Next month the crew discovers Doug Tanner's hiding place.

Doug has now teamed up with Barry Witte and Mike Clark and they have tackled the miserable job of getting the shaft alleys and water tanks below C-202L bone dry. They are circulating air through all the tanks to arrest the corrosion. Doug is used to this kind of work, but with regards to Barry, all the old Navy hands seem to enjoy watching a three-strip ring knocker mucking around in tanks. For Barry's part it's always been whatever it takes to care for this ship.

Finally, months of effort paid off when we received a load of material from Camden, New Jersey. **George Amandola** spent a month collecting parts from a scrapper in Camden. Volunteer **Chuck Longshore** works for a trucking company, and his boss let him swing down to Camden after a deliver in Manhattan. Now we have some "like new" watertight doors and

ladders to replace the wasted ones aboard SLATER.

Leading Radioman Jerry Jones takes a lot of harassment from the crew, but he may have his revenge. This month he and his crew got the radar set that Lou Rena donated to us operating. Not content to have a computerized system of ship's bells ringing over the 1MC every thirty minutes, he took the sound effects one step further. He has teamed up with **Bosun's Mate Mike Muzio** to improve the sound effects. Together they make the oddest team since Laurel and Hardy. Jerry, the jovial, affable, intellectual, perfectionist techno nerd. And **Mike. Mike.** Well, let's just say that if you wanted to preserve one perfect example of an Old Navy, Asiatic fleet, tin can Bosun's mate, you would preserve **Mike.** You have to be a fleet sailor who served between 1900 and 1970 to understand that. They just don't make 'em like that anymore. Anyway, **Jerry, Mike and Mike's bosun's pipe** spent about an hour together in the CPO mess as Jerry recorded Mike doing all the traditional 1MC calls and announcements. Now **Jerry's** computer program and SLATER comes alive with all the sounds of a WWII DE in commission. In other words, we have to listen to **Mike's** raspy bosun's mate voice every fifteen minutes for eternity. I believe it will only be a matter of time before the stern lookout will be calling the bridge, "**Computer overboard! But don't bother doing a willie! It went straight to the bottom!**" At the end of each tour, the guides will be able to tell visitors what a blessing it was when Admiral Zumwalt did away with the excessive use of the Boatswain's pipe in 1970.



Breakfast for the Saturday crew: Tanner, Spain, Teal and Benner.

See you next month.