



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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Troy Savings Bank President Dan Hogarty and Leslie Cheu make the presentation to the SLATER.

I came in this morning at 0800 and it was pouring down rain. From the fantail, I heard the sound of a needle gun. Dick Smith had arrived on board at 0600 to needle gun the fantail. Not to be deterred from his mission, he had rigged a tarp over the foxer winch and was working on the deck despite the rain. You can't stop this crew. My griping out the weather last month must have paid off, because it has been much improved. Hot, but much improved. Some days have even been comfortable here on the old SLATER. Our attendance has picked back up to a respectable level. The big news this month has been the success of our fund raising efforts. **The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation** has joined the ranks of local contributors to the Destroyer Escort

Historical Museum Endowment Fund in an effort to guarantee the USS SLATER's future. On Friday July 11th, **Daniel J. Hogarty, Jr.**, The Troy Savings Bank and Charitable Foundation President, presented the \$10,000 grant award to **Frank Lasch**. Under the tent, on the new deck, in the rain. **Mr. Hogarty, Frank, Mayor Jennings, Commissioner Bob Cross**, our volunteers and 25 former crewmembers of the USS AHRENS DE575, observed the check presentation ceremony. **Gordon Florey**, former USS AHRENS sonar man from Scranton, Pennsylvania commented, "I first saw the SLATER in New York when she was towed back from Greece. The restoration has been tremendous."

The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation is the first organization to step up to the plate since the formal commencement of the local fund drive. They join the **Cohoes Savings Bank Foundation, Trustco Bank, The Lawrence I. and Blanche H. Rhodes Memorial Fund and Ronald MacDonald House Charities** as several of the local organizations that are working to make the SLATER even better. We trust that many more will follow their example.



This picture would make good wallpaper for a computer desktop. Click on the picture to get a larger version suitable for wallpaper or printing.

During the AHRENS reunion an unidentified DE veteran approached Board President Frank Lasch about getting information to set up an annuity for the SLATER. Frank promised to get right back to him as soon as he finished showing Dan Hogerty and Leslie Cheu around the ship after the check presentation. Well the AHRENS crew departed shortly before Frank finished his tour, and Frank has suffered several sleepless nights since trying to remember the gentleman's name. If anyone could shed any light on the incident, or if you are interested in setting up an annuity to benefit the SLATER, Frank would be more than glad to hear from you.



Tanner and Benner fabricating the gangway saddle.

Thanks to Don Montrym's and Nancy Buxton's efforts identifying potential private foundations, we received additional operating grant funds from three sources from April to June 2003. The first positive response came from the **Alexander Onassis Public Benefit Foundation**, a private foundation based in Athens, Greece. Responding to a letter of solicitation that we sent in February 2003, this foundation sent us a check for \$10,000 dollars to be used for general support. In March 2003, our museum received \$2,050 from The **Howard M. Bush Foundation** based in Troy, NY. We used the funds, as per our agreement with the donors, to underwrite field trips to the ship for 500 at-risk students from Rensselaer County. In June, the ship received a challenge grant of \$12,500 from the **Bender Family Foundation**, a local group based in Albany, NY. We received a check for \$6,250 in June 2003 and we will receive the other payment after we have raised \$5,000 from another source. We will use a part of the

funds to underwrite the development of new school programs. The remainder will be used to purchase classroom supplies for our new shore side visitor's center.

Several important in kind donations have come our way recently. In addition to the brochures printed by **Duncan Press** in Lodi CA, we have a new wonderful postcard. Another benefactor of the project is **Bill Conklin** who served on DE447 and DD652. Bill volunteered to have new postcards printed up for resale in the gift shop. **Jerry Jones** took one of **Richard Andrian's** photos taken during the spring move, and dressed it up on his computer a little to remove the unsightly fenders, and sent them off to Bill. The result is a great new SLATER postcard and QSL card for the radio nuts. Jerry then had an 11 x 14 print made of the same picture for resale in the gift shop. The post card and the picture are now among our best sellers. This was a real group effort, and we thank everyone involved. We never would have been able to afford this kind of quality on our own.

SLATER Trustee and Albany Water Department Commissioner Robert Cross also did a little four color printing for us. Working cooperatively with **Richard Andrian**, Bob did a four-color brochure about the SALTER that will go out with all the water bills on the City of Albany over the next three months. Again, it was a beautiful effort and really helps us promote the project to the local community.

Nancy Buxton made our annual applications to the New York State Department of State requesting funding to build our mooring dolphins, and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to support the anticipated repainting of the SLATER's hull next year. In addition, we still have a Save America's Treasures grant application pending with the Interior Department to fund tank and bilge cleaning in the machinery spaces.



Bob Kibbey working on the power shed.



Bob Kibbey's tee shirt.

It's back to real work. The major project remains the installation of the new aluminum gangway that will allow visitors to exit the ship directly to the deck, and pass through the gift shop on the way out. **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal** have spent their Saturdays hanging off the seawall as they work to weld up the new mounting bracket for the gangway. Doug spent several hard hours drilling holes in the wall with a standard half-inch concrete drill before **Gene Cellini** saw his plight and brought down his Hiltie Drill. If it has to do with concrete, Gene has the tool. Too bad we never remember that until the job is done. We're hoping to have the gangway installed around mid August. The rest of the shipfitters, **Clark Farnsworth, Red Hume and George Erwin** have stayed with the chock project. Tanner says he can cut them off a lot faster than Clark can fix them.



Some people thought it would be a cold day in hell before the electricians painted, but that's a little extreme.

Shore side, the new Visitor Center is a great asset. BM2 Beth Spain gets quite perturbed when anyone refers to it as a trailer. And you know how Bosun's Mates are when they're perturbed. **Jerry Jones** enlisted the help of Robert "**Bob**" **Kibbey**, a new Slater volunteer to build the gift shop electric power doghouse. Bob is an Air Force Veteran who works for Curtis Lumber Yard. He is so "gung Ho" that he made himself a tee shirt with a picture of the Slater on the back from the SLATER picture that **Richard Andrian** took. **Gary Sheedy**, who is pulling down about eighty hours a week at his regular job, managed to find the time to finish the trim and paint the transformer shed.

The chippers and the painters are now on the fantail. Dick Smith, Earl Gillette, and Ed

Whitbeck peck away at the rust, trying to take the time to do it right. Former radioman **Stan Murawski** has really taken a step up to improve his value to the project. He has decided that rather than work in the radio room over the summer, he would paint. Nothing is harder to find than chippers and painters, so he has become infinitely more valuable to the ship. **Erik Collin** and his paintbrush have been the mainstay of the deck force, going behind the chippers and keeping the ship looking sharp. He has a disciple in Sea Cadet **Shaun Phoenix**, and together they really have the ship looking great.

There was even a rumor that a couple of the electricians Barry Witte and Gary Sheedy took the hint and were seen with paintbrushes, but hell would have to freeze over before that happened. Barry has continued his work on the alarm systems and is preparing to tie the communications of the Visitor Center and the ship together. **Erik Collin, Barry and Jerry Jones** had a major hand in convincing us to get a high-speed Internet connection here aboard the SLATER. This has been a real bureaucratic battle that we won't get into. With only two phone lines, and four computer workstations, everyone needed to be on line at once. There were many days I figured that since the phone line was tied up and I couldn't get out on computer I might as well go chip paint. With the DSL we can all be online at the same time, plus both phone lines are open for calls. How dependent we get on this new technology. What happened to "If they didn't have it in 1945, we don't need it now. Pass the carbon paper."

Roy Gunther prepping the whaleboat for the launch.





Bob Lawrence working on gun 42.



Frank Beeler cleaning recoil springs on gun 41.

Back aboard ship, the ordnance guys are having a big month. Frank Beeler and Bob Lawrence are working on the forty-millimeter mounts, cleaning and painting the recoil springs and painting the water jackets. As we've said before, Frank is a former turret captain off the cruiser SAVANNAH. He related the story about how his division used to muster next to the Marine detachment for morning quarters. Frank took great delight in using his stage whisper to call over to the Master Sergeant, "Psst Buddy, Hail me a cab." Frank made it a point to avoid those guys ashore. **Rich Pavlovik** continues his work restoring 20mm gun 26. He has the elevation and train all freed up. And Master Chief **Dave Floyd** and **Andy Desorbo** have moved out of the gun shack on the 01 level forward and are working on 20mm mounts 21 and 22. They are still waiting for Doug to finish grinding the gears for three inch mount number 2.



Part of the radio gang Murawski, Breyer, Stolte and Bulger.

Coming off the success of the American Radio Relay League field day, the radio gang is now preparing for the Historic Naval Ships annual radio field day. Despite a shortage of engineers and generator problems with **Stan Murawski's** portable generator, they made over 300 radio contacts during the course of the ARRL event. **Joe Breyer** got the most contact despite being in what he termed an electro magnetic black hole. This year, using SLATER's original "long wire" radio antennas, three radiomen

participated in the 24-hour "around the clock" event. They "worked" approximately 300 ham stations from Canada to Costa Rica and Cuba, and New York to California. All of these "contacts" were made on the 40 meter and 20 meter bands using CW (Morse code) and SSB (single sideband voice). Each contact was a potential emergency message, which could have assisted in disaster relief or health and personal welfare. The crew hopes to establish and publish a regular operating schedule in the near future for those wishing to contact us, so stay tuned. The crew has

now turned their attention to radar. They are modifying an extra SA PPI indicator to mount the modern commercial radar unit, and hope to have a real radar operating in CIC before the end of the tourist season. And if you understand all that you need to be down here working with them.



Roy and Rocky ready for launching.



One big push to get her out of the chocks.

"Rocky" Rockwood and Roy Gunther have been putting the finishing touches on the whaleboat in preparation for our seasonal launching. We expect to put the boat in the water this Saturday, July 19th. The USS SLATER's 26' motor whaleboat is, quite possibly, the last operating whaleboat in the country restored to her original Navy configuration. We figure that at least 5,000 of the wooden hulled 26' motor whaleboats must have been built over the years spanning World War I to the 1950's, before they were replaced with fiberglass whaleboats. To be the owner of the last of the breed is quite an honor and a responsibility, much like caring for the SLATER. Initial restoration of the whaleboat was completed last summer and the whaleboat participated in the regatta held in conjunction with the dedication of the Hudson River Way.

The rest of the crew continued their dedicated support of the project, keeping her clean, guiding tours and keeping the machinery running. I thank you all.



Pat sent this picture of Frank getting a haircut as one of the perks for being part of the LST crew.

Volunteer Frank Perrella has embarked on a real adventure. He's signed on to be a cook on the LST 325 for the last half of her Mississippi cruise. For those of you who've been living in a cave, a group of bold LST veterans sailed the 325 back from Greece in 2001 to make her a museum. She has been undergoing restoration in Mobile for the last two years. They are now making a trip up the Mississippi in America's heartland to



Gus Negus and Barry Witte prepare the emergency diesel.

Evansville Indiana where so many of the LST's were built. They are averaging well over a thousand visitors a day on their inland odyssey. Kind of makes me wonder if we ought to take our show on the road. **Pat Perrella**, our volunteer curator extraordinaire is following on shore. She wrote " Cook Perrella is doing great - has a super nice bunk in Officers Country right across from the showers , sinks, urinals & commodes! All work quite well and he even has running water (potable, too!) in the sink in his room so he can shave in there! He & Bill the other cook get along real well as they worked together in Mobile. Nice big galley with reefers also working well below deck for food storage. The Captain just loved Frank's peach cobbler today; what a way to make brownie points with the CO. " All I can say is Frank never made me peach cobbler. We'll have to talk about that when he gets back. Needless to say,

we miss both Frank and Pat. I think we're one of the few museums in the country that can claim our collection is 99% archived, thanks to Pat's efforts. You will be able to follow Frank's adventures on the LST 325 website.



Dick Walker gives a tour.

I've rushed to get this out because Monday I will be starting my vacation the last week in July. We certainly don't want a repeat of the "Volunteers Revenge Issue" of two years ago. The rumor I hear is that means a vacation for everyone else. In a perfect world, when I get back we'll have the new gangway installed, our DSL computer line run, all the computers will be networked, all the decks will be painted, they'll be money in the bank, and the crew will be out in the whaleboat fishing.

See you next month.



Andy Desorbo at work on gun 32.