

# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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This was the first year in my twenty-two years I can remember that we were actually open to the public in December. Since Thanksgiving was so late this year, December 1<sup>st</sup> fell on a Sunday, and that was our last open day. Before we could catch our breath and start securing the ship for the winter, the snow started falling. It began around noon on Sunday, while we were open to the public. **Shanna** shut the ship down at 1400, and sent the guides home for the last time. The snow kept up, on and off for three days. We were shut down on Monday.



*Tour guide Chris Soulia with the last tour of the season  
Then it began to snow.*



*It was the end of the month before the deck gang got the guns covered.*

By the time it ended, Albany had been hit with 22.6 inches, which made it the eighth largest snowstorm in Albany recorded history.

**Fortunately, thanks to Gary Sheedy's foresight, the crew had taken the awning down the previous Saturday, so that didn't collapse.** Coming in on Tuesday, in the absence of any volunteers, **Shanna, Jo Ann,** and I dug our way in. We connected the most essential doors: the trailer office, quarterdeck door on the ship, and of course the head. We're especially grateful to **Anthony Renna**, owner of the Dutch Apple cruise boat, for plowing the lot, and an anonymous Albany City plow driver, who helped me get the gate open.

It wasn't until Saturday that the volunteers arrived in force, and got the whole place dug out. But first, as it was December 7<sup>th</sup>, most of our volunteers attended the annual Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony, sponsored by Albany County and The **Joseph E. Zaloga American Legion Post 1520**. Our Chairman **BJ Costello** emceed the event, and had the privilege of introducing his younger brother, retired Vice Admiral **Barry Costello**, who spoke to the over 100 guests present. The **Albany High School JROTC** cadets paraded the colors, and our local dignitaries spoke of the significance of the day. All enjoyed the traditional Navy style breakfast put on by the Post's Kitchen Staff. My personal thanks go to **Harvey Martel**, who did a great job of making it all happen. Then it was back to the ship to shovel. **Doug Tanner** even arrived with a small snow blower that was a great help in getting the observation deck cleared off.

Preparations continue for our trip to the shipyard. **Ed Zajkowski** and **Barry Witte** have put together a 42 item list of things that have to be accomplished prior to departure, and Ed constantly updates me on how few actual volunteer days we have between now and the departure date, as well as how little we've gotten done. **Cathy Wheat** is doing her bit, packing up all the artifacts on display forward. Back aft, having just gotten the special collections space set up from our 2014 shipyard overhaul, **Shanna Schuster** will be breaking down and stowing the displays again. Other work goes on, based on the planned shipyard project. We plan to scale and preserve the void and fog oil tank below the steering gear compartment, which means cleaning out the shipfitter shop, laundry, and stowing all the display items. **Danny Statile** and **Andy Sheffer** continued fabricating replica SL Radar system waveguide.



*Doug and Dave clearing the observation deck following the big snow storm.*



*This can't be good. Shipfitters Dave Mardon and Tim Benner working in CIC.*



*Covering up the forties.*

**All the running lights are being restored. Gary Sheedy** connected the electrical wiring for the new recognition lights, and coiled up the armored cable so it can be run down the mast when the lights are installed. He has mounted a new junction box at the base of the mast, replacing the original junction box that was badly corroded.



*Gary Sheedy working on the recognition lights.*

**In CIC, Gary and Barry Witte have been investigating and removing dead ended cables, remaining from the Greek era when the radars were modernized.** We've never really did a thorough restoration of CIC. They are making sure that all the cables are properly run, straight and parallel in the cable trays. They also reran the two cables for the port and starboard running lights. The next project will be pulling the new cables for the fighting light system.



*Steve Klauck installing a smoke detector in the radio shack*

**In the pilothouse, we are relocating the audio amplifier and an outlet to make room for the new fighting light panels. Thomas Scian** has been restoring the navigation light "telltale" panel. The back bulkhead of the pilothouse is being restored to its 1945 configuration, to accommodate the recognition light switch panels.

**Another major project going on is the upgrade to our fire alarm system.** Our dated fire alarm system is 24 years old, resulting in a couple of late night encounters with our friends at the **Albany Fire Department** due to false alarms. Working with **Sanders Fire and Safety**, we are in the process of installing a modern fire detection system to protect our world-class vessel. Volunteers **Barry Witte, Steve Klauck, Ken Powers,** and **Jakob Weidman** all assisted in removing the old system's detector mounts and replacing them with all new ones. There are about 60 on the ship in total. Installation of more detectors and tweaking the programming will continue, but we now have a state of the art, programmable fire alarm system.



*Thomas Scian and Dick Walker emptied out the flagbags.*



*A man of many talents, Doug Tanner even changes vacuum cleaner bags.*



*Shanna and Jo Ann have been keeping busy recording donations, writing thank you letters, making deposits, and paying the bills.*

**Up in the radio shack, we lost one of our dedicated radiomen when Mike Wyles moved to Florida.** He made the 1600 mile trip to the sunshine state and trailered his sailboat down. He's trying to get used to the heat, 80% humidity, and lots of crazy driving. Before he left, he purchased that commercial two-meter ground plane antenna to go on the yardarm when we are in the yard, so we'll have up-to-date ham radio capability. His new museum ship may be the AMERICAN VICTORY in Tampa, which is restored and USGC approved to go on short cruises.



*Radioman, Steve Syrotynski, completed the installation of the rebuilt RBB receiver. Here he makes a contact with the TCS transmitter.*

**Stan Levandowski was back with us.** He worked with **Steve Syrotynski** for a day, reinstalled and tested the KAT100 auto tuner. Our amateur station is back on the air once again with "instant QSY". Steve is overhauling the Navy receivers, one at a time. He finished up with the RBB receiver, and has it working fine. He's been coming in Saturdays, operating the original TCS set on 75 meter AM, and been getting a signal out just fine. He brought in an original T-17 microphone to use on it, as the gain on the one that was there was not that good. He's donating it to the ship, along with the original mic holder for it.



*The morning after the big storm.*

**Over in the trailer, Doug and his crew finally got that leaking gift shop window replaced.** And Trustee, **Diane Watters**, purchased a carpet and flooring business, and is donating new carpet for the gift shop, classroom, and office.

**Speaking of Diane, she has been a lifesaver during the accounting transition.** She has a thorough knowledge of accounting and the QuickBooks software, and has generously been donating several hours a week to make sure that the books are current, and the bills paid, until a permanent bookkeeper can be found.



*Cassidy on tour with her family.*



*There is always time for a coffee break.*



*Tony led the crew in Christmas Carols.*

**We got into the Holiday spirit with our annual Christmas Part.** Thanks to the efforts of Board President, **Tony Esposito**, and our chef, **Chief Smith**, the whole crew was treated to a delicious lunch on Monday the 16<sup>th</sup>. Tony provided steaks, Santa hats and Carol books for the whole crew, who joined together in song. Trustees **BJ Costello**, **Bob Lazar**, **Alan Fox**, and **Diane Watters** were all present to thank the volunteers for their continuing efforts. Tony also took time to remember the volunteers who crossed the bar last year.



*Our sailmaker Angelo Bracco assisted in the galley grilling steaks.*



*Chief Smith and Earl mashing the potatoes.*

**By now you've all received the November SLATER SIGNALS by snail mail, with the little return envelope and the plea to help keep a volunteer warm this winter.** Now that our stream of operating revenue has ceased until spring, we are counting on you to help get us through another Albany winter without having to dip into our savings. Our goal is to raise \$50,000. That is why I have made my annual \$100 donation to the USS SLATER Winter Fund, and I hope that you all will do the same. If you can donate more, please do. If you can't, please give what you can. If you prefer to give electronically, you can click the link to our homepage at [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and click the donate button. Despite the cold, the ship will hum with activity all winter long, as cold does not deter our volunteers.



*Cathy Wheat has been securing our artifacts in preparation for the shipyard visit.*

**I want to thank all of you who have donated so far for your kindness and generosity.** We appreciate your faith in us, and will make sure that your donations are used as responsibly possible. As a tribute to all the men and women who have served, and are now serving, we will maintain USS SLATER to the highest standards to honor them.



*Pearl Harbor Day and the Joseph E. Zaloga American Legion Post.*

**Thank you and see you next month!**

**Don't forget the donate button on our homepage, [www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org) and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.**