



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Executive Director

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum  
USS Slater DE-766  
PO Box 1926  
Albany, NY 12201-1926

Phone (518) 431-1943, Fax 432-1123  
Vol. 14 No. 10, October 2011



We're becoming a popular site for Navy reenlistments.

It's that time of year that seemed so far away when we opened up in April and now we're asking, "Where did the season go?" One more month until we close for the season, and it's time to wrap up the outside work and start thinking about starting the interior work. We had several special events this month. Doug Tanner hosted a meeting of the American Welding Society on the messdecks. Several of us attended including **Tim Benner** and Super **Dave Mardon** because we heard they were having pizza. Doug lectured on the work he did assisting in the construction of the mooring dolphins last year and went into detail about the design and construction with a Power Point presentation. We also hosted the reunion of the USS GRISWOLD DE7 here aboard SLATER. We hosted two Navy reenlistments, one for Ken McBride and another Brandon Franklin. We also hosted a training day for the New York State Police HAZMAT Team. They did a drill in which they set up simulated bio-hazards on the messdecks and had to practice how to deal with these problems in a shipboard environment. This is another way SLATER still serves the community.

**The Hull Fund contributions continue to come in.** As of October 31 we were at \$535,827. We are anticipating a bump from our Veterans Day event at the Fort Orange Club, “One Date – One Ship: Veterans Day 2011 – 11/11/11.” We are combining this one special ship with this one special date and are hosting a cocktail reception on November 11, 2011 at the Fort Orange Club that will honor our Veterans and help us move closer to the goal of the much-needed USS SLATER hull restoration. Joining as Patrons of the event are **Ray & Lois Windle and Jack Bertsch of Polymer Conversions, Inc.** The Sponsors include **BBL Hospitality, Berkshire Bank, Maximum Security Products, and SEFCU.** We thank you all for your support.

**The Capital District Chief Petty Officer’s Association celebrated the 236<sup>th</sup> Navy Birthday aboard SLATER on October 13<sup>th</sup>.** We mustered the ceremonial detail at 0900 and at 0930 Master of Ceremonies and CPO Association President HTCS (SCW) **Randy Bowers** ordered the colors posted. EMCM **Jack Ryan** called for a moment of silence for our departed shipmates. The high point of the ceremony for the SLATER crew was the recognition of the CPO Association’s SLATER Volunteer of the Year. This year the award was given to our dependable boatswain’s mate **Bill Haggart**. Bill served aboard the jeep carrier USS PALAU CVE122, the submarine rescue ship USS KITTIWAKE ASR13, and the harbor tugs YTB540 in Boston and the YTB176 in Argentina, New Foundland. That must have been cold duty. Bill has become the “Go to guy” for rigging and deck work aboard SLATER and the award was well-deserved. The ceremony completed with Navy Birthday cake and a lasagna brunch prepared by Chief Bernard Smith and Chief Art Dott. We congratulate Bill on the award, but warn him not to think he can slack off now that he’s been recognized.



**Cub Scout Pack 93 was one of the many Scout groups that visited us this fall.**



**Members of the Albany Garden Club planted bulbs for next spring.**

**A lot of energy went into grant writing this month. Heather** was attempting to finish and submit two major grants that the museum is applying for through the state's new Consolidated Funding Application. One grant request through the Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation will support the continued restoration of the ship. The second request through the New York State Department of State Waterfront Revitalization Program would fund the ice deflection bulkhead we need just north of SLATER to remain in Albany year round. Both applications were almost complete when we learned that only a governmental entity could submit an application to the Department of State. Bob Cross, Rich Hendricks and Tom Owens of the Port of Albany agreed to submit the application on our behalf, so the effort did not go to waste. But this change required starting an entirely new application, the content of which had mysteriously changed between completing the prior application and the newer one, and then instructing the Port how to handle the submission process. Once the two applications were successfully submitted, which did include the crashing of the application's website and other minor errors, the real fun of submitting additional documents started. New York State will only tell you what additional documents will be required of you after you submit your application, which leaves each applicant only a week to get the items in by deadline. Upon Heather's first attempt at submitting the required documents, she found out that the inbox where she was supposed to email them was full and could not accept anything. This then required yet another call to the Department of Parks and Recreation who promised they were, "working on it." After the scramble to submit both the applications and grant work per my demands, combined with the hectic Sunday she had experienced, Heather certainly deserved a slow day to recover.

**The tour guides were busier than ever, providing each scheduled group or walk-in visitor with an outstanding tour.** It is always nice to hear the terrific comments from the visitors as they leave the ship. We know how lucky we are to have each and every volunteer guide. But, as with any happy family, we want to continue to grow, and need you to join our volunteer crew. If you are a veteran of the Korean War or Vietnam War, you will fit right in because Destroyer Escorts served through both wars. Our educational role is growing beyond the ship. School programs now include a focus on the significance of the home front and the ways in which the war affected the people at home, in school, or working in the factories. In its own way, the home front was a battle front whether through the Civil Air Patrol or school children who conducted scrap drives for the munitions program. Our program, *Nora's Garden*, travels into the classroom with a focus on the affects of war on the family. **On the last Saturday evening of the month, most of the northeast was blanketed with snowfall ranging anywhere between 4 and 24 inches.** Even though the forecast for the Albany area called for an unknown amount of snow, the adventurous Cub Scout Pack 9 from Saranac Lake arrived for their overnight stay onboard. All were safe and warm because, as ever, we and the scouts are prepared to face the elements, just like the Bluejackets who served in the snowy North Atlantic during World War II. We lucked out and only received two inches here in Albany. With the leaves still on the trees and the threat of power outages due to downed limbs, the overnight encampment had the potential to be a real adventure that fortunately did not materialize.

**Slaving away with little recognition, Heather Maron splits her time between the Museum Collections and managing the Ship's Store.** As collections manager, Heather's office is located just forward of aft steering, as south as you can be on the SLATER and still be in the Albany City limits. When taking on the position of Collections Manager, Heather anticipated leaving the hectic schedule and demands of being a tour guide behind, in favor of the solitude of the collections. This past month, however, has proven to be the exact opposite of those expectations, much to Heather's frustration. She has experienced unplanned crowds, loud and sudden noises, and unexpected assignments.



Heather att work.

**On a recent Sunday, while independently manning the operations of the store and ship, Heather noticed that the computer and the cash register in the store were suddenly running on the backup battery.** After checking the alarm panels, she found out the ship was also running on backup power. Of course, she did what her instincts and training had taught her and called me before attempting to do anything else. After some chaos and attempts to get tours off the ship safely, because the source of the lack of power was still a mystery, I and **Barry Witte** arrived on the scene. It was determined that a transformer had blown in the area, causing the ship and store's power to be single phasing but not completely out. Thus, we had limited lighting aboard the ship. It was a beautiful day and we had a fair number of visitors coming in so we quickly found an alternate power source for the cash register. We rerouted the tours for topside only at a reduced admission price with a return coupon to revisit the ship and see it all.

**Convinced that chaos will assuredly ensue anytime she is manning the Ship's Store, Heather was not necessarily looking forward to starting another day up there.** Sure enough, something was bound to go wrong and of all things, she could not get the computer to connect to the network. After checking the cords and wires behind the computer she found the interesting issue, the cable had been chewed off by a mouse. Once again, Heather was faced with a dilemma and this time chose to sit in feigned ignorance until the rest of the staff arrived for the day. Rosehn thankfully produced a replacement cable and **Erik Collin** promises to run it (properly) as soon as possible. The mouse was found late morning, sitting fat and happy in the garbage can. Rosehn released him into the wild of our Victory Garden and quickly reset the traps; since we can clearly only give mice so many chances.

**I'm sure Heather is anxiously awaiting the ship's departure from Albany, so she can finally have her days of archiving back again; on the positive side however, I was extremely gracious enough to find money in the budget, even after all of her slow Sundays, for a heater for her space just past the Special Collections space.** Much to the chagrin of **Katie Kuhl**, our former Collections Manager, who suffered through two Albany winters with a 1500-watt space heater, Heather will happily spend her winter warmed by a new 15,000 440volt compartment heater. It appears there might be hopes for her to reduce her daily uniform to one jacket instead of three, and she reports the gloves might even come off for really important tasks. So before sending her your old uniforms and photograph albums, we request that you ensure it is not a Sunday, that she has not just stayed open for a 3:59 tour, and that the power is both on and producing adequate heat.



**Archivist and Librarian Frank Peter cataloging technical manuals back in the supply office.**

**Another unsung hero who works back with Heather is Franklin Peter.** Frank has been mentioned in the past, but he is our volunteer librarian and archivist. Frank is charged with taking disorganized boxes of important papers relating to destroyer escorts and the project's history and putting them in order so we can find the documents we need. Most recently Frank has been working on several boxes of archival material donated from the estate of the

project's founder, the late **Marty Davis**. In addition Board President **Frank Lasch** cleaned out his office upon his retirement as a practicing attorney and left several boxes of organizational documents with us. It's Frank's job to sort through the material, organize the important stuff pertaining to a specific DE or aspect of the project's history, and throw away non-related and duplicate material. He also scans our photo albums that have been donated. His most recent project is organizing about fifty fragile vellum blue print masters that were donated to the museum by **Ed Zajkowski**. When I found I had never typed the minutes to the April Executive Committee meeting, I went to Frank Peter, and it took him about three minutes to find the hand written minutes I had put on the back of the agenda. It takes all kinds of talent to keep the SLATER afloat.



**Barry Witte and Rob Nielsen restored and rewired our shore side signal lamp.**



**Gary Sheedy proudly showing off the new compressor safety guards he fabricated from scratch.**

**The topside projects are winding down for the winter.** Doug Tanner has been away for a couple of months supervising construction projects in Baltimore. He's been gone so long I didn't recognize his voice on the phone. This former Coast Guard damage controlman has been threatening to start volunteering on the USCGC TANEY in Baltimore, the last Pearl Harbor survivor. Our other dependable 87 year old welder **Clark Farnsworth** is laid up with a fractured shoulder. He slipped and fell in his bedroom, but he assures me the injury was not sex-related. He's almost over his quota of get well cards. In the absence of these two stalwarts, **Gene Jackey, Dave Mardon,** and **Joe Delberta** have been handling the load. Joe is finishing up the local BOCES welding class and has become so proficient that he has been offered a job down at Bollinger shipyard in Louisiana. The project they have taken on is the completion of the repair work to the old radio direction finder platform on the pilothouse level around the mast. If you remember, we started this project to replace wasted metal several years ago. It kept getting deferred, one, because it was a cosmetic repair and two, because it's right on the tour route and Monday is the only day we can work on it. It looks like they will have it done just before winter sets in. It must be wearing Dave out because he says he's heading to Florida for three weeks in November.

**Another group trying to beat winter is the chippers.** The deck gang has been working up the starboard side main deck and they are about thirty feet from the starboard breakwater and completion of the project. Earl Herchenroder, Ron Mazure, Chris Fedden, Don Miller, Walt Stuart and Bill Wetterau have all been taking turns on needle scalers and now are trying to beat the clock. The other issue is waiting for days that are over 50 degrees so we can lay paint down. The project has been handicapped by the fact that **Bill Wetterau**, an unemployed electrical engineer, recently found employment.



**"Super Dave" Mardon cleans up after himself following a grinding job on a chock.**



**Joe Delberta works on repairs on the signal bridge.**

As you can expect, we are always very happy to see our best volunteers gainfully employed, and no longer able to while away their leisure hours on SLATER. Fortunately for us, Bill has started coming in on Saturdays, so we haven't lost him completely. Down in the engine rooms, the engineers have completed cleaning all the exhaust elbows on number four main engine and are spending their time cleaning the engine itself prior to the installation **As a follow up to last month, I am happy to report that Les Beauchaine is out of rehab and back home following bypass surgery.** He sends his thanks to all his SLATER shipmates who stopped by to see him. We're still waiting for the "You'll feel twenty years younger" to kick in so we can put him back on a needle scaler.

And finally, as you read in his letter, there will have been a change in leadership on the Museum Board of Trustees. Both Sam Saylor and Frank Lasch will be resigning their positions effective November 11, 2011. I can't express how indebted we are to both these men for their service to SLATER. For Sam, there is no doubt that without him, SLATER would have never been returned from Greece. He has served as our Chairman of the Board since 1993 and put in more volunteer hours than a full time employee, writing letters and keeping track of our members. Sam's place will be taken by Bartley J. Costello. BJ, as he is known, is a local attorney who served as executive officer of the USS GENESSEE AOG-8 during Viet Nam. BJ's brother Barry Costello retired as Commander in Chief of the Pacific Fleet, so the family has a strong Navy tradition with ties to Albany. Sam's contribution to the project can never be understated. Suffice to say I would not be in this office on this ship without the vision of Sam Saylor. Together with Marty Davis, they formed the team who will always be our founding fathers. Sam will continue to have a guiding hand in the policy making of the museum. He's just backing off from the day-to-day responsibility. Our thanks to Sam for his years of service cannot be enough for all he has done for the Museum.

**As for Frank Lasch, there is no way I can express my gratitude for his support and confidence over the years.** Frank turned down a JAG commission so he could go to sea on the destroyers ROBERT L WILSON DDE847 and PARSONS DD946. Frank came on board as President in 1998 and put the project on the road to financial stability. He successfully lobbied for \$200,000 in member items from the New York State Legislature back in 2000, and raised \$90,000 from the Destroyer Escort Commanding Officers Association thanks to a challenge grant issued by **Nash Broadus**. Frank was instrumental in the creation of the endowment fund which is now over million dollars. Always the fiscal conservative, without Frank's efforts we would be living hand to mouth. Never a micromanager, Frank created the environment of financial stability that has made my job tenable. Both these fine gentlemen have also been major donors personally to the project, leading by example. They will both continue to serve on the Board as voting members, but we should never forget what they did for the USS SLATER.

See you next month