

## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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Vol. 5 no. 10, October 2002

### SLATER board member Ray Windle is a high tech kind of guy.

Ray was a former IC Electrician aboard the USS FIEBERLING, and ever since his Navy training, communications has been an important part of his life. He donated money to make sure we got the 1MC on the SLATER working. He made his living selling radios and cellular phones, and he is never out of touch. You can get a hold of Ray anytime, anyplace. I have Ray's cell phone number on the ship in the Rolodex. Unfortunately, not in my wallet.

Ray is a dedicated member of DESA and the foundation, and attends every DESA Convention. I was looking forward to seeing Ray at the DESA Convention in Myrtle Beach, which was the big event of

the month for me. I was invited to the Annual DESA Convention to report on the SLATER's progress. I am a low-tech kind of guy. I was only dragged into the computer age kicking and screaming. As I write this, I miss the clack of the typewriter keys. I do not own a cell phone. I grudgingly own a credit card. Again, I like to believe that if they didn't have it on the SLATER in 1945, I don't need it today. But when I was invited to the big annual DESA Convention at Myrtle Beach, I could have used Ray's high tech phone number.

**My odyssey to Myrtle Beach began simply enough.** I planned to take a van from Albany to LaGuardia Airport in the city because the fare was about a third of what it would have been flying direct from Albany. I picked up the van at 11 a.m. on Monday morning and we headed south. The drive to NYC was without incident. The van dropped me off promptly at two, and took the rest of the passengers on to Kennedy airport. My flight didn't leave until six, so I had some time to kill. About five, we prepared to board, and waited. And waited. And waited. About six thirty they announced that due to mechanical failure, the plane could not be flown. It wouldn't be fixed in time. It couldn't be moved from the gate. They would be flying another plane for us in from Detroit. They would let us know when that plane took off.



This must be the place. A beautiful model of the USS BANGUST decorated the hotel entrance.



Mrs. Doris Stoneman presents a donation to Sam Saylor from the USS O'Flaherty crew for the SLATER. The SLATER received many donations at the convention.



The SLATER Seminar at the DESA Convention in Myrtle Beach.

**Sam Saylor and Ray had planned to meet me at the Myrtle Beach Airport at eight p.m.** I now really wished I had **Ray Windle's** cell phone number so I could call them and let them know about the delay. I had no way to reach them, so I called my wife and left instructions on the answering machine to try and get a message to **Sam** at the hotel. The time at LaGuardia dragged on. My solution was to go to the restaurant and order a small pizza. That made things better. I got back to the gate around seven thirty and the gate was moved from terminal C to terminal B. We all trudged over to B and waited another two hours. By now I was really wishing I had Ray's cell phone number. It was ten p.m. before we finally left the runway. By the way, the plane was an MD-80, not a DC-3. To compensate, Spirit offered us ten percent off our next flight and a free drink. I gladly accepted the latter. We arrived in Myrtle Beach around midnight only to encounter drizzle. I wasn't sure if Ray and Sam were still waiting for me or had given up completely. I wandered around the airport for about half an hour, figured they'd given up, and caught a cab to my hotel.

**The sixty-eight dollar a night room was a suite with an ocean view and a balcony, far more than I was accustomed to or needed .**

Despite the late hour, I called **Sam** to make arrangements to meet up with him for my SLATER presentation the next day. Needless to say, he was relieved to hear from me. I was staying in one of the overflow hotels, the "Ocean Forest". **Sam** was in "Sand Dunes", all part of the same chain. When I asked **Sam** where I was relative to him, he said, "Right next door." That worked out great so we set up plans to meet for breakfast at "Sand Dunes" at eight. I thought about getting **Ray's** cell phone number, but now that I was "Right next door," we'd connected, there was really no need.

**I awoke Tuesday morning to steady gray rain.** I got dressed, packed up my slides and brochures and went down to the lobby. I chatted with a DE sailor I knew, and then approached the desk clerk. I asked how to get to "Sand Dunes." He pointed north and said, "About a mile and a half up the road." I considered my options. I went back to the room and called Sam's room for his definition of, "Right next door." No answer. I tried Ray Windle's room. No answer. About this time I was really wishing I had Ray's cell phone number. I considered my options. This is where a lesser but more logical man would have called a cab. I like to walk, so I chose to walk. It was a delightful walk, but by the time I reached Sand Dunes I was pretty soaked, despite the dry cleaning bag I used as a raincoat. When I got to the hotel the first person I ran into was "**Michigan**" **Dick Walker**. I persuaded him to risk losing his parking space and drive me back to Ocean Forest, so I could get my slides, brochures, and dry clothes. Before leaving, I tracked down **Sam Saylor**, and reported aboard. On the way out, I ran into the same DE sailor I'd been chatting with in the lobby at Ocean Forest. I asked how he'd gotten there. He replied that he'd taken the shuttle van, which ran between the hotels for the DESA Reunion.



Dick Smith in the center front row at the SLATER Seminar.

**Dry and armed with SLATER propaganda, Sam invited me into the First Timer's Meeting.** I explained to them about what we were doing in Albany. I handed out about forty newsletters and SLATER info packets to the new DESA members. When I ran into **Ray Windle**, I got his cell phone number. Of course, I didn't need it for the rest of the convention. The big show for me was at 1400, the SLATER Seminar. I gave a slide presentation showing what the crew in Albany had accomplished in the past year. I began by asking how many of the sixty or so people in the room were not members of the SLATER museum. One poor unfortunate raised his hand, so I was preaching to the choir. Several of our Albany volunteers were in the audience including **Dick Smith** and **Chuck Ray** and a bunch of guys from Michigan and SOLDESA. Fortunately, they kept the heckling to a minimum, until the end when the floor was open to questions. **Dick** raised his hand and demanded, "When's us volunteers gonna get a raise!?" Guys, your shop steward is looking out for

you. Anyway, the reunion gave me a chance to thank the DESA members for all their support, donating the money for the depth charges, and to update them on what's been happening on their ship this past month.



The crew at the volunteer party.

If you looked at last month's edition of the SLATER SIGNALS on our website, you saw a late arriving picture of Frank Perrella and Gordon Lattey which had no explanation other than the photo caption. The month started with the annual volunteer appreciation party held by volunteers Frank Perrella and Claire Oesterreich. The function was held aboard at 1700 on the first Saturday in October, and this year the weather was perfect. For the second year in a row we planned the party around Benner's schedule. We knew he'd be away that weekend. Frank and Gordon Lattey set up the chow line, and an estimated seventy volunteers and wives attended. We are always amazed to see just how many people are involved in this project, especially when you try to pack them all on to the mess decks at once! A lot of people care enough about this ship to agree with the volunteer contract terms that read, " Long hours, hard work, no pay." The food was great, as usual, leaning heavily toward Italian delicacies. As always, we extend our sincere apologies to the usual ten- percent who didn't get the word. That ten-percent is an ever-changing group, but this time it included some of

our most dedicated volunteers. We will work to improve our communications system.



Progress on the trailer deck.

The crew continues to plug along. In the trailer Larry Lachance, Gene Cellini and Dave Blostein are moving along with the construction of the deck, which will extend from the trailer to the sea wall. They formed and poured twenty-four concrete supports as a foundation for the deck. Gene Cellini in particular finally found his niche. As a union mason by trade, there hasn't been a lot of call for his particular trade in the three years he's been involved with the SLATER. This was a tough break for a poor guy who has concrete running through his veins. He's finally in his element: forming, mixing and pouring. They did it all with a shovel, hoe, trowel

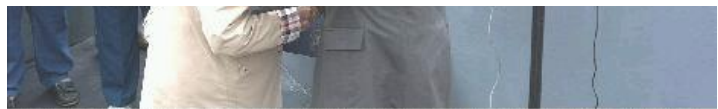
and wheelbarrow. They are now in the process of decking it over so it will be ready for spring. Got to rush to beat the snow. Poor Dennis Nagi is continuing his painting and carpentry work inside and getting ready to do the flooring. Just when he thought he was done, we now want to move a door and a window. Gary Sheedy is lining up a contractor for that part of the job. Dick Walker and Beth Spain purchased used shelving for the gift shop from an Ames store that was going out of business. I just hope they can remember how to reassemble it. The conduit for the electrical wiring is in and we are planning to purchase a transformer. Bob Callender, Larry Williams and Ken Kaskoun finished the interior phone lines in the trailer so we're ready for that phase of the hook up. Through the good work of water commissioner Bob Cross and Mayor Jennings, the city is in the process of running a sewer line near us as part of the continuing waterfront improvements. So we have hopes of having real restrooms soon instead of the portajohns! We were sadly disappointed when we were turned down by the Interior Department for our 2002 Save America's Treasures Grant. This would have been \$200,000 to do preservation and environmental work in the tanks, voids and machinery spaces. On the positive side, Ronald McDonald House Charities came through with a \$12,000. grant to help is with the trailer restoration. The money will be used to develop our classroom and improve access and facilities for the public. This was one of the largest grants they have given in the Albany area and we are most grateful for this show of local support, and to all those who helped us get this grant.

Back on the ship, Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal are continuing progress on the rangefinder platform.

It's been pretty cold and windy up there, and they're hoping to finish before the snow flies. Erik Collin has been up there with them using Ray Lammer's restored electrical parts to detail the sonar shack. Clark Farnsworth, Red Hume and George Erwin are continuing work on the chocks. Gunner's Beeler are wrapping gun two for the season. The gun is nice and free. They're painting and trying to determine where the leak is that's letting rainwater drip through the gun base into



the officer's country passageway. I know they'd get it fixed faster if the leak were in the CPO mess. **Barry Witte, Mike Clark and Gary Sheedy** are down in the reefer machinery room. They completely restored and reassembled the main power and ventilation panel down there. There are still rumors that they are installing a hot tub and sauna in the engineer's storeroom below the reefers. Speaking of leaks, our CIC man **Bob Dawson** isn't too happy. Since work began on the range finder platform, he has water coming into the CIC. Fortunately Doug has an idea of what caused it, and he's planning to plug the hole.



Mayor Jennings thanks veterans and their families at the USS BENNION reunion.

**We wrapped up our final reunions of the season with visits from the USS BENNION, USS ROBERT BRAZIER, USS EISELE, USS KOINER, USS STAFFORD, USS BUTLER, USS HILARY P. JONES, and USS COCKRILL.** As always, these folks showed a great appreciation for the SLATER and our efforts to restore her. Special guests this month were four British veterans of Captain Class frigates who came over to attend the annual DESA convention in Myrtle Beach. They were **John Huckle**, his wife **Eileen**, **Ralph Parks-Pfeil** and his wife **Robin**, **Charlie Blinkow**, and **Harry Fine**. As you know the DE's were originally requested by and designed for the Royal Navy. Seventy-eight EVARTS and BUCKLEY class ships were actually transferred where they became the Captain Class frigates. I guess, then, the USN decided they were too valuable to give away. The British were especially appreciative of our effort and are gathering British DE memorabilia for our museum. The next reunion of the British DE veterans will be in April 2003, and they is encouraging any American DE veterans who would like to attend to come on over. If you are interested you can contact **Ralph Parks Pfeil, 8 Meadow Green, Welwin Garden City, Herts, AL8655**, England for details. If you want to see England, this is a perfect opportunity.. The whole visit and the cultural differences were crystallized in my mind when we were having dinner at **Frank Lasch's** house. **Eileen Huckle** looked at the wine bottle in front of her, studied the label and fairly shrieked, "Good god! Am I reading this right! A warning label on a wine bottle! Isn't this carrying caution to extremes?" One might fear that all British children are being born brain damaged because their mothers don't have the benefit of warning labels on their wine bottles.



Chuck Teal working on the platform.



Erik Collin painting waterways.



Tim Benner and Chuck Teal Working on chocks. Benner looks pretty grumpy about missing the party.

**Back in Myrtle Beach, Tuesday evening I gave the slide presentation to Ray Windle's USS FIEBERLING group, who in turn presented me with a flag that had been flown aboard in 1945.** The next day I made myself available to answer questions and hand out literature. I was invited in to the General Business Meeting with over 500 DESA attendees and introduced to the group. I asked the group how many of them had volunteered on the SLATER at one time or another, and about 25% raised their hands. When I asked how many were SLATER Museum members, it seemed that 75% raised their hands. We're making progress. I thanked them for their support and opened the floor for questions. The most common question being, "When are we gonna get underway?" Then, sitting in the back of the room, **Dick Smith** raised his hand and yelled the same question he'd asked during the SLATER Seminar, "When are us volunteers gonna get a raise?!" Not wanting to get into a lengthy explanation about hell freezing over, I politely exited the room. Later, I hooked up with **Smitty** and we both attended an excellent seminar **DESA Webmaster Pat Stephens** gave on computers and the Internet. When that ended **Dick** and his wife **Mary** invited me up to their room for a drink. He poured me a very stout scotch and ginger ale. The event turned into a full-fledged party that included the Walkers and **Ron Zarem**. I was scheduled to give the slide presentation at **Ron's** USS BROUGH banquet that night, so I was a little concerned with **Dick** mixed up my second scotch and ginger. But I was holding my own fine. **Dick and Mary** then invited me to supper down in the dining room. I sat across from **Mary and Dick**, making what I hope was reasonably intelligent conversation. When the steak was served I continued talking, handling my knife with great dexterity. I did glance down at my plate to note that I was using my spoon to hold my meat while I cut it. I deftly swapped the spoon for my fork, and if **Mary** noticed, she was too polite to say. I knew I was in great shape to give a speech.

**My talk at the BROUGH banquet went off fine, if not quite as perky as some of my other presentations.** I know it went off fine, because my slide show was given before



Stan Murawski purchased and is replacing all the exterior radio antenna insulators.

dinner, and when they were seated, their salads were already on the tables. The salads included those cute little tomatoes that make such excellent projectiles. At the end of my presentation, there was applause, and all the salads were still intact. The sunrise over the Atlantic on Thursday morning was beautiful. I noticed it as I was getting on the van for the airport. The day was gorgeous, and Myrtle Beach must be a wonderful place when the sun shines. The trip home went without a hitch, renewing my faith in air travel.

**In closing, let me address the local volunteers who may be concerned about the suspicion of collusion resulting from all the rumored socializing, fraternization, and drinking that took place between the SLATER management and your union representative.** Dick Smith represented your interests with the tenacity, determination and courage that would be a credit to any former teamster. Unfortunately, however, due to the present economic downturn, the terms of the contract will remain unchanged. **Long hours, hard work, no pay. See you next month.**



The USS Cockrill crew was the last reunion group of the season on a chilly October 30th.