

SLATER SIGNALS

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

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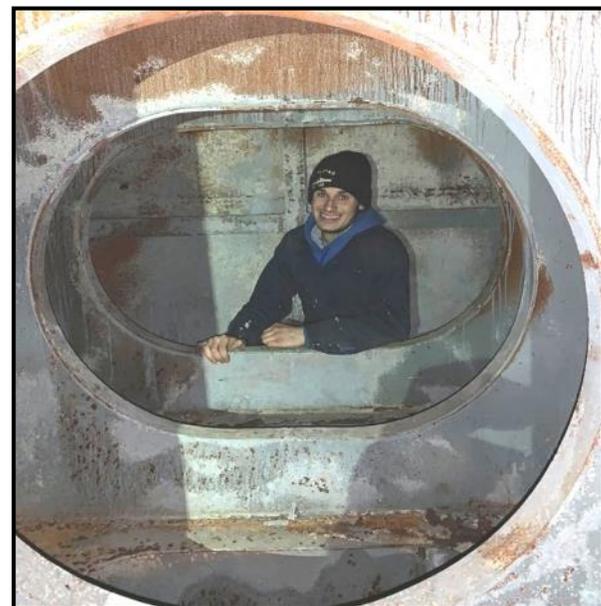


My day always starts with an email from Ed Zajkowski. Ed is functioning as our shipyard coordinator. He's been making bi-weekly calls to Vice President **Joe Eckhardt** down at Caddell's yard, keeping them updated on our status, and any change in our work list. Hiring a construction supervisor to do this would cost us a fortune if we had to pay for it. Ed's emails always begin with a bold face 22-point reminder of how many days we have left before we get under way, followed by a not so polite version of "Get off your butt!"

Our only concern now is that the worries about the coronavirus might disrupt our schedule, but as of now, we are steaming as before. To that end, Program Manager, **Shanna Schuster**, is making all of her promotional plans for the upcoming season. She has



Dick Walker folding thank you letters.



Thomas checked the forward peak tank and voids. Everything was dry, just the way we like it.

sent out postcards to all the area libraries, scout councils, VFW and Legion clubs, retirement homes, schools, and summer camps, encouraging them to book tours, overnights, oral presentations, and lessons. She also sent letters to our friends at the libraries, encouraging them to participate in our Museum Pass Program. We are expanding the program whereby we sell family passes to libraries that their patrons can check out. Then a family can come visit the ship, free of admission for four people. The number of libraries participating in the program continues to increase.

Shanna is confirming with the tour guides, checking to see when they are available for tours for this upcoming season. She needs to get an idea of where new guides will be needed to fill out the schedule. Hiring the new interns always marks the end of our winter season, and even though we have an extra month of it this year, with the trip to the shipyard, she is a stickler for keeping on schedule. She has posted the position with UAlbany, Siena, St. Rose, and Hudson Valley Community College, and sent an email to many of the professors at those schools. If you know a college or university student who would be a great tour guide, have them contact Shanna for an application at info@usslater.org.



Bob Calendar adds up all our volunteer hours.

Jo Ann Mulligan has taken full charge as our new bookkeeper and data base manager. Thanks to the excellent training she received from Trustee **Diane Watters**, she is now fully on top of things. So much so that she survived her first full audit, was able to locate all the documents the auditors requested, and made necessary adjustments to the 2019 ledger. Her February was filled with digging through boxes for documents that the auditors from Bonadio needed to complete the process. Lessons were learned, and we've got some new internal procedures to make it even easier next year.

We have contracted with Carl LeGere, at Empiretech, to upgrade our computer systems. We've all got new computers at our workstations, and upgraded all the software. He also moved us to a faster, cheaper server. With newer computers with more memory and faster operating speeds, we're almost in line with current day business practices. Of course, the

process was not without pain. I was using Thunderbird for my email and had all my addresses there. When they took my old computer, Shanna set me up with a Gmail account. We haven't been able to figure out how to move my email addresses and groups from Thunderbird to Gmail. I got my new computer with all my files on it this week. I breathed a sigh of relief, thinking I could go back to Thunderbird email. Not so fast. Since we changed servers, the old email doesn't work. We'll get over that hump this week. The bottom line is that if you haven't heard from me, this may have something to do with it.



Coffee's hot, heater's on, join us in Chiefs.

We owe a great debt to **Mark Gardiner**, who has been making upgrades to our website, to make it more user friendly for smart phones and tablets. He also has put up the first year and a half of SLATER SIGNALS. That has never been accessible online before. If you want to relive the early days of the project, head to the publications on our website and scroll down.

We're also working with Carl's wife, **Dawn**, to bring us up to speed on Internet security, including the protection of sensitive personal information. This will bring us into compliance with New York State's new Shield Act. All this runs contrary to my philosophy that "If they didn't have it in 1944, I shouldn't need it today." Bring back typewriters and carbon paper. That will fix the hackers.

Like January, it has been an exceptionally mild February. Except for one cold snap, exterior work has proceeded unhindered. **Doug Tanner** has kept his shipfitters busy with several projects. **Andy Sheffer** and **Chuck Teal** made repairs to the wasted bulkhead and deck in the forward passageway in officer's country. They then moved outside, and completed the installation of the electrical stuffing tube nest in the gun director tub that was leaking into the fire control hut. They are now patching a section of deck on the flying bridge that was leaking into CIC.

Doug worked with Gene Jackey, Earl Herchenroder, Dave Mardon, and Danny Statile, to complete the lower section of surface search radar replica waveguide. This section runs from the radio room to the radio direction finder platform. Doug is also replacing our twenty-year-old water heater. That has been installed in the muffler room, and the plumbing is nearly complete on that project. **Dick Walker** took the old hot water heater to the scrapyard with some other miscellaneous steel, and brought back a check for \$26.00. Every little bit helps.



Teamwork: Danny and Tim working on the replica waveguide.



Barry and Gary practice a little naval archeology in the pilothouse.

Doug also had his crew working on a temporary aluminum gangway. This is necessary, because when we lift off our permanent gangways before going to the yard, we need something light enough that we can manhandle ourselves without a crane. Because of liability issues, we purchased the gangway for \$1.00 from Doug's friends at **3-D Rigging**. The crew rigged it with wooden handrails that withstood Doug's 200-pound pull test. So, when we get back from the shipyard, we'll sell it back to 3-D for the same dollar.

The deck gang has been making their preparations for the shipyard. Boats Haggart, Paul Guarnieri, Bill Holt, Rich Mouzakes, and Warren Brozio pulled up all the circulators, washed, and stowed them. We could have saved ourselves the trouble and not rigged them this year, for as warm as it's been. Boats also took in all the rat guards. He's ready to single up. Cathy Wheat has been packing up the artifacts and displays in officer's country. Aft, in the special collections space, intern, John Epp, has been busy organizing the magazine to better house the artifacts. This will also help with packing-up the collection prior to our shipyard visit. Volunteer, Jodi Treadway, completed inventory of the research archives.

RPI Midshipman, Jack Carbone, is writing work packages for every mast job for which we have built a kit. These work packages are illustrated instructions to the shipyard management that describe in technical detail what is to be done with each kit, so everyone is aware of the details. If done correctly, this will ensure that the outcome is as intended: as historically accurate as possible, as easy to maintain as possible, and safe as can be for our volunteers to work on and visitors to walk under for many years to come. Mistakes and miscommunications are costly - especially so in a shipyard. We are doing everything we can to avoid mistakes before they happen, to be the best stewards of your donated money as possible. Other than financing the project, this is the most important Mast-related job we can do right now.

RPI midshipman, Brendan Lutz, is leading a small team of underclassmen to completely restore the fully intact CIC Plot table that we purchased from Wil Donzelli. They are making good progress. The base is nearly done. They are waiting for good weather to apply a topcoat of paint. Then they need to figure out how to get the 24-inch-wide base through the 23-inch-wide doorframe, without scratching the paint they will so carefully apply. They are engineering students. They'll figure it out.



RPI Midshipmen priming the CIC plotting table.



Doug and Chuck work on installing the new hot water heater.



The deck gang pulled up the circulators.



Bill and Rich laid out the holes for the new mast ladder.

The midshipmen also delivered the fuse doors for the Fighting Light Control panel, cut to exact size by the water jet on campus. Thanks to **Barry Witte's** tenacity, as well as his drive for authenticity, we also received a prototype switch for the Fighting Light Control Panel from the company that originally manufactured them, **Electroswitch**. **Electroswitch** is still in business, making switches for US Navy new-construction ships. **Paul Mercurio**, an engineer with **Electroswitch**, was able to find their original blueprints in their corporate archives. They sent an exact replica of what they built for the US Navy, before and during WWII. We are working with them to obtain the 18 switches we need to make our Fighting Light replica a fully functioning replica, the only one that will exist in the world.

Gary Sheedy, Ken Powers, Steve Klauck, and other students have been assisting with the cable replacement in the pilothouse, CIC, and the sonar shack. They are doing a lot of cable replacement, where cables were cut to facilitate wasted stuffing tube replacement. And a lot of new wiring is being run, in conjunction with the recognition light panels, and also to replace older deteriorated navigation light wiring.

Machinist, Alex Titcomb, worked overtime to fabricate 28 ladder rungs for the replacement mast ladder. Bill Holt and Rich Mouzakes drilled 56 holes in the ladder rails. The raw materials were purchased from **Diane Watter's Metals Supermarket** on a Saturday morning, and all of the work to make the parts was done that same day. That following Monday, **Dick Walker** delivered the parts to **Hal Hatfield's Maximum Security** shop, where Hal's son, Michael, is supervising the assembly welding. The talent of the Slater's volunteer team, and what we can get done when we all pull together amazes me.

Steven Syrotynski has continued his work in the radio room. He replaced the cords on both lamps at the operating positions. Then he went through the tubes on the TCS transceiver, the antique piece of gear that he has been broadcasting on Saturdays. He's getting ready to tackle the RAK-5 and RAK-7 receivers. It's nice to have some activity in the shack again.

I can't thank you all enough for your generosity in supporting the Winter Fund Drive. I hate to be the guy who always has his hand out, but you all will be getting one more mailing, requesting donations, to help with the shipyard overhaul. I mean, you try running a Navy ship, without a Navy appropriation, and see if it doesn't turn you to piracy. This Fund Drive should be entitled, "The more money we raise, the more work we can do." Right now, it looks like we won't have any problem making our \$200,000 match to get the \$200,000 grant. The issue is that we anticipate that the total package, including towing will be right at \$700,000. That means a loss of \$300,000 that will come out of our savings, unless everybody digs a little deeper.

If you need some inspiration, go back and take look at the World of Warship Naval Legends about USS SLATER that is now online. And then go back to our website, and read those early edition SLATER SIGNALS that Mark posted.

You won't believe how far we've come, and we aren't done yet.

See you next month,

Tim



Chuck by the newly installed railings for the shipyard gangway.



Cathy is keeping track of all the bunk straps.

Don't forget the donate button on our homepage, www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.