

# SLATER SIGNALS

## The Newsletter of the USS Slater's Volunteers

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**Moored as before, we are now settled into our new berth at the Snow Dock with a months operating experience behind us.**

**Again, we can't say enough about Gene Krott and his men from DOT Bridge Maintenance.** His crew of volunteers stayed with us for a week after the move to complete installation of the 35' steel gangway (a heavy sucker) and the completed facing off the ragged cuts where the Greek torpedo deck had been, added a new handrail to our inclined ladder aft and completed securing the camels.

**Water Commissioners Bob Cross and John Kosa of the Albany Water Department** made good on their promise to run water to the ship a week after we arrived. We have a temporary garden hose rigged aboard until we can make repairs to our fresh water system.

**We went on our expanded Tour Visiting schedule of four days a week, Thursday through Sunday, 11-4,** stretching our volunteer guide crew with these additional days. Great credit goes to Educational Coordinator Nancy Buxton and Annette Beauchaine for hours spent on the phone, cajoling the crew for more hours and recruiting and training additional guides.

**Albany Mayor Jennings's Summer Youth Work Program** is what really pulled us through this first month of four-day operations. Five high school youths, Jessica Wildman, Mary Silverstein, Mecca Carter, Chris Hartnett and Rich McDevitt were assigned to the Slater. They helped Nancy with the tours and assisted with cleaning the ship. They also worked on several major painting projects including the 40-mm guns, port depth charge projectors and the fantail. The program ended on August 15<sup>th</sup> and their help will be missed.

On the morning of July 28<sup>th</sup> the **Coast Guard Cutter Sturgeon Bay** came up river and hailed Ship Superintendent Tim Rizzuto by name. Most of the crew assumed that the law had finally caught up with Tim and that an arrest was imminent, but **Captain Matt Gimple** was simply looking for a place to tie up prior to attending the Rensselaer River Festival, on the other side of the Hudson. The **Sturgeon Bay** moored to our starboard side for three days. Capt. Gimple even turned his crew loose to help us on Wednesday and they scaled the port roller loaders, helped Hack Charbonneau (DE-531) weld up the Flagbags and scrubbed all our exterior bulkheads. The girls in our crew were extremely grateful to Capt. Gimple for allowing them to use his head instead of the pierside port a john.

**Ship work continues.** Charbonneau completed the welding installation of the Flagbags. He then went to work on repairing the Lifeline Stanchions. Bob Callender (DE-744), Ken Kaskoun (CVE-108) and Ray Lammers have made a great team replacing life-line cables, a project that should continue for the next couple of months. We have 500' of destroyer snaking and a thousand dollars worth of fittings on order to support their effort. **The electrical gang** is working on our weatherdeck lighting to satisfy an insurance requirement that we show lights at night.

**In the “unsung heroes” department,** Dutch Hannmann (DE-530) wins the “I can hold a needle gun over my head longer than you can” award. He made a personal vendetta of scaling the overhead under gun tub 42. He’s been at it three days a week for a month. He engineered a special tool to hold up the needle gun. Nobody is fighting to use it.

**In more cerebral pursuits,** Dave Meyersburg of the State Office of Parks and Recreation has been donating his Wednesdays to cataloging all our books and artifacts. He has set up shop back aft in the supply office and is slowly creating order out of chaos amid an avalanche of spare parts, priceless DE artifacts and junk.

**The Monday crew starts things buzzing aboard the Slater.** Richard Smith (DE-5), and Chris Fedden (DD-711) are chipping and painting the decks back aft. Dick a former Teamster, says he is used to the dirty jobs. Clark Farnsworth (CV-32) and Ray Lammers (APD-81) have made a great welding team. They repaired all the amidships 20- mm cooling tubes and have also been working on the life-line stanchion repairs.

**We lost one of our best men,** Chief Engineer Ed Wakeman (CV-62, DD-946, FFG-15). The former Mercer Co. Maintenance Superintendent has moved to Cleveland, Ohio after doing a beautiful job restoring gun 23 and all the MK 51 director gunsights. We gave him orders to the submarine COD. It was a trade. Paul Farace sent us eight dinner plates, cups, and dessert plates and a promise of two broken clocks. In return, we sent him one of our best volunteers. Ed said his key to the Slater was the only key he regretted giving up. Gordon Lattey has promised to continue Ed’s work on the 20-mm guns.

**Finally, we can’t say enough about our guide staff.** Our regulars Art Dott (USNR), Al VanDerzee (VC-5), Larry Case (Sea Cadet), Roy Gunther (DD-711, LSD-17)), Bob Callender (DE-744), Les Beauchaine (DE-509), Charlie Havlick (DD-886), Leo Baehler (DE-182), Bill Goralski (BB-61), Frank Perrella (DE-326), Ed Sakacs (DE-191), Kevin Lynch & Pat McCoy (DMNA), Roger Oesterrich (DE-680), Alan Guard (DE-5, DE-258, DE-442), Dan Goldstein (DE-580), Chuck Marshall (USNR), Chuck Lossi, Nick D’Ambrosio, Al Blevins, and Bob Thibault (USCG) have shouldered a heavy burden with the expanded visiting schedule. We owe them a real debt of gratitude. (If we’ve left you out, it’s unintentional and we apologize!) Nancy especially appreciates Art Dott’s fortitude when it comes to the weather! He always seems to be the next guide out when a tornado is looming (May 31<sup>st</sup>) or during gale force winds! We’ll have a reputation as good as the USPS with Art on deck!

**Sales are kept organized** at the ticket and gift shop by Pat Cancilla (DE-441) his wife, Betty, Dick Cromer (DE-634), Claire Oesterrich, Pat Perrella, and Annette Beauchaine.

**Meanwhile, out in the parking lot,** Don Kruse (DE-682) has been under fire with all the additional people stopping by to see what the ship is all about. Our new location is much more open to the public and as the parking is free the cars keep piling in. Don has been a great “traffic cop” and managing the most efficient positioning of the cars. He directs everyone to the closest location to the “Contribution box”. Most of the drivers are only looking at the ship and it’s dangerous shore duty out there.

**While putting the finishing touches on the restoration of portside Officers Stateroom (forward of Wardroom),** Roy Gunther has made keeping our sinking camels afloat his personal mission. He is constantly experimenting with line and supplemental buoyancy techniques to make them last the season. He spends more time on the camels in shorts and bare feet than he does on the Slater. This is no easy feat, climbing the Jacobs ladder amid the floating trash, dead carp and recently sighted snapping turtle.

**The Glen's Falls Naval Reserve Unit** has continued to provide major welding support. Kent Chase and crew welded up several holes in the decks including helping to replace a 3' x 3' section of deck under 20-mm gun 27 that involved moving the whole gun mount. That was a major undertaking. They also were instrumental in putting the Steam Siren into operation! That has become a real attention-grabber during our days.

**The Slater has welcomed aboard more of her former crew and NYC volunteers.** Jim Moore (DER 318, DE 1028) drove up from Phillipsburg, NJ with his son to check on his panty hose filters on the compressor in B-4. Ralph DeSantis (DE 684) came up from the Bronx for a Sunday visit and Stelios Baltis, a former Greek Cadet who trained on the Aetos 01 stopped by from his home in Latham, a suburb of Albany, to discover the Slater was his former ship.

**Since Chris Nardi got the IMC working** we thought it would be nice to have a bell on the quarterdeck. Frank and Pat Perrella have been very generous to us before, and we mentioned it to Pat. We didn't expect her to steal Frank's bell out of his office while he was away on a business trip. Frank was very understanding about how Slater loyalty can inspire low deeds, and he lets us keep the bell.

**An excellent website on the Slater is being provided by the NYS Division of Naval & Military Affairs.** Webmaster Michael V. Stenzel has included recent events and views from the Rensselaer side of the Hudson River. Click on over to <http://www.dmna.state.ny.us/> and the "USS Slater DE-766" for a detailed description of the ship and some excellent photos and links to other DE sites.

**Cash Flow wise,** this first month of four day tour operations grossed about \$10,000. Including ticket and gift shop sales. We are working hard to live within our means. A small historic naval ship can be comfortably run on about \$300,000. A year. We're looking to do it on \$120,000., not counting grants and capital expenditures.

**A few notes from Nancy:** I am trying to simplify the "sign up" procedure for tour guides and other volunteer duties that must be scheduled. The ORANGE BINDER is near the deck log so please take a moment and check your schedule and let me know when you can work. It will save a lot of telephone calls and my time can be better spent organizing the School Tours for the Fall. We still need volunteers so try to spread your enthusiasm and bring your friends down to see the ship. The Slater seems to speak for herself and we have lots of first-time visitors coming back to help!

**Finally, all hands are looking toward August 25<sup>th</sup>.** The arrival of the DESA convention from Springfield, MA. We are expecting to host 500 DE veterans and their families in our biggest event of the year. Nancy and Pat are in training to get the proper bell-count under control for the time watches in preparation for the DESA visit. **Remember girls,** 24 bells does not constitute Noon or even Midnight for that matter!

**Our only wish** is that we had more time to get the ship spruced up for them. We all wish we'd gotten this restoration off the ground about fifteen years ago while we were all younger and more of our shipmates were alive to be a part of the Slater project. There is so much to do, and time is slipping by; but then look how far we've come.