



# SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**The four months of winter are akin to a shipyard overhaul for us.** As March draws to a close there is the annual rush to try and get the ship ready for opening day. At the very end we bring in contractors to wrap up the work the volunteers weren't able to finish. As the contract painters work in the aft passageway, other contractors scaffold the mast, and the volunteers work frantically to wrap up unfinished work, everyone feels that frustration that if we just had a couple more weeks we could make it so much better. I'm not sure if this analogy is valid for a ship that is welded to the pier, but **Herman Wouk** wrote a wonderful passage in *The Caine Mutiny* describing a shipyard overhaul. He wrote, "In the days that followed the *Caine* was hastily put back together by the yard workmen, none of its parts much better for the disassembly; and the general hope, as in the case of a clock taken apart by a child, was not that it would perform in an improved manner, but rather that it might begin ticking again as well as before." Anyone who has been through a shipyard overhaul can sympathize. For us, we just have to clean her up and get her looking as good as she did at the end of last season. The clock is ticking and time is up.



Getting the scaffolding up.

**This mast and radar project is going forward thanks to two grants we recently received.** One from **Tin Can Sailors** to help cover the cost of scaffolding the mast so Doug Tanner can install the platform and SL radar, and one from **The Destroyer Escort Sailors Association** to cover the cost of repainting the mast so it will look great for their convention in September. With the help of our volunteers, the contractor SAFWAY has scaffolded the mast. It took two days. Doug Tanner has the platform ready to go. The camels went in on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. In a perfect world, I'd have the ship over in Albany with the SL radar antenna installed, the aft passageway finished and the mast painted by the first Wednesday in April, the 4<sup>th</sup>. That's not going to happen. Now, it looks like we will hang the SL radar platform on Monday the ninth, lift the radar on the tenth, and move as soon after that as we can get a tug. That week school is out, and lots of parents may be looking for something to do with the kids. However, we need to be pier side in Rensselaer to install the SL radar platform and dome. Board Chairman **Sam Saylor** would really like to see the SL installed before

we leave Rensselaer, and we'd really like to have it up for the DESA convention in September. In Rensselaer, we can probably get free crane service to make the lift. From the snow dock in Albany it will take a really huge (and undoubtably expensive) crane to make the reach to the top for the foremast when we are laying 24' off the sea wall.

**We suffered several personnel casualties that truly affected the restoration effort this winter.**

Both **Stan Murawski** and **Jim Gelston** continue battling cancer. Stan was healthy enough that he went through chemo and radiation at the same time, but it knocked him for a loop. Jim usually makes it down Mondays and helps out where he can. Stan was

back aboard with his wife Linda for the first time March 27<sup>th</sup>. Treatments are finished as he starts the road to recovery. **Jerry Jones** broke his leg, which definitely set back the restoration of the SL radar console in CIC. And last week, **Erik Collin** was taken to the hospital with kidney stones, and that had a negative impact on the big clean up. After a week in pain he was treated and is recovering well. Our best wishes go out to all our shipmates for speedy and complete recoveries.

**In Erik's absence, the big clean up continued.** "Tanner's Ville" has disappeared. Last week, with the help of two RPI midshipmen, Doug took apart his winter hut, coiled up his welding leads and brought all his sawhorses, steel and the precious radar platform aboard the ship. Most of the tarp he had used was so badly destroyed that he threw it in the dumpster. Doug's work hut was located about ten feet from the emergency diesel exhaust stack. Of course Chief Engineer **Gus Negus** waited until Doug was out there taking apart his hut to test fire the emergency diesel in preparation for the trip back across to Albany. Having not run the engine in three months, it belched more than a little smoke. Heck, it belched a lot of smoke. It laid a smoke screen so thick you couldn't see Doug or Tanner's Ville. It didn't last long. Just a minute or two, and then the engine began purring with no smoke. It was hard to figure if the engineers were prouder of their purring engine, or smoking out the deck department. Gus, **Karl Herchenroder** and **Gary Lubrano** spent most of the last month struggling to repair a fresh water heat exchanger from their next engine they hope to get running, the eight cylinder ships service generator in the aft engineroom, B-3. The heat exchanger spent two months on the bench in the machine shop, the focus of their hopes and curses. They finally gave in and hauled it over to our old friends at **Albany Radiator**. **Bill Oliver** helped us out several years ago, donating and installing the radiator that we use to cool the emergency diesel generator, and he has come to our aid again.





**Gordon Lattey works on an electrical box in the aft passageway.**



**Karl Herchenroder installs refurbished towel racks in the crew washroom.**

**The aft passageway is coming together.** Chippers **Peter Jez, Rocky Rockwood, Earl Herchenroder, Gene Jackey, Don Miller, and Erik** have completed their work making the decks and bulkheads smooth in preparation for painting. The electricians have done a remarkable job straightening out the overhead cable runs. All the brackets were unbolted, wayward armored cable replaced and straightened light fixtures restored, and battle lanterns installed. **Gary Sheedy, Gordon Lattey, Ken Kaskoun, Bob Callender, Karl Herchenroder and Barry Witte** have been doing shipyard quality work throughout the winter. They continue to be supported by the Naval Science Midshipmen from RPI, who have supplied us with as many as twenty volunteers in one weekend to help with the clean up.

**The shipfitters were also engaged in the aft passageway.** **Doug Tanner, Joe Breyer, Tim Benner, Chuck Teal, Clark Farnsworth, and Shawn Bevins** cropped and replaced about twenty feet of wasted bulkhead along the deck edge of the house, primarily in the cross passageways. Much of this had been doubled while SLATER was in Greek service, a temporary fix and a process which seems to accelerate the corrosion. These have all been repaired to accepted industry standards. And the best part is that we didn't start any fires in the process. That's thanks to all the good work **Nelson Potter and Bill Coyle** did as their fire watch. As I write, the crew is in the final stages of cleaning up the area. Painter **Kevin Sage** has masked everything off, finished off the insulation repairs and sprayed out the gray trim. Hopefully, by the end of the week, the whole area will have a fresh coat of gloss white spray paint. Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the process of restoring the passageway on the main deck pretty well trashed bunkroom C-201 below. The need to keep the hatches open while welding to make sure nothing caught fire down there also allowed a lot of dust and dirt to settle below. That will be

another clean up effort. The compartment is also full of all the damage control gear that was in the maindeck repair locker. That will all need to be wiped down and restowed before opening day.

**Up in CIC, thanks to the "Kids" from RPI and a lift from Will Donzelli, the original SL surface search radar console had been reassembled and is in place, as well as the SL radar transmitter unit next to it.** All this equipment has been disassembled to make it light enough to haul up to CIC and small enough to fit in the door. Getting it back together was no easy task for a couple of guys with no radar experience, but we were fortunate that Will Donzelli happened by that afternoon to lend a hand, and his experience with such gear was invaluable. The old SO PT boat radar that sat in CIC for years will find a new home on the PT-796, the Higgins boat in Fall River Massachusetts at the PT Boat Museum and Library at Battleship Cove. The VD radar repeater that occupied the SL's space for the last ten years has been moved to the pilothouse. The original location for the VD unit was on the flying bridge, but considering that that level is not open to the public and that the rare VD PPI repeater would be exposed to the weather, we've made the historical compromise to place it in the pilothouse to better protect it and so it can be interpreted to the visiting public. **Erik Collin's** CIC simulation project is coming along well, with a radar presentation on the SA air search radar console, and the dead reckoning tracer now able to simulate an attack. We are also in the process of rebuilding the chart table that includes the wells for our scarce Hamilton Chronometers that are on loan from the **Maritime Commission**.



**Tim benner uses a chain fall to lift the SL radar platform up the mast.**

**The one piece of work that we had planned in radio was the rebuild of the TCS power supply so that we could get a World War II era transmitter back on line.** That came to a screeching halt because **Joe Breyer's** talents as a welder were in greater demand than Joe Breyer's talents as a radio technician. Maybe one day we will let him get back to his first love, but that's the price our volunteers sometimes pay for being multi-talented and flexible.

**And then there's the reefer deck.** Remember the reefer deck? Of course you do. You've only been reading about it for, like, nine years. Gary had planned to spend the winter down there, but we decided his talents as an electrician were more in demand in the aft maindeck passageway. So we made the trade and gave him **Chris Fedden** to chip in return for directing Gary's effort on the cableways aft. Well, Chris finished his chipping, and Gary finished his wire ways, but the reefer deck still has a long way to go. Kind of like the chock project, but that's another story.

Outside the Chief's quarters, **Les Yarbrough** continues to make beautiful canvas covers for our 20mm guns.

**Erik Collin finished out cleaning and touch up painting in the CPO mess, in officers country and in forward crew's berthing.** Things are coming back together. Monday, April second, we have scheduled camel day. That is one of my favorite days, the day we reassemble the mooring and shackle the sixteen camels back together. I hope I don't put a hex on things, but the spring melt seems perfect. A gentle thaw that isn't causing any problems with high water or ice rushing southward. Weather wise, it doesn't look like there will be any problems getting the SLATER across. Once the ship is cleaned up and open to the public, the first major effort will be repairs and repainting the mast. As long as we have the scaffolding up, there are many repairs that should be done to the ladders and running lights that we won't be able to accomplish without the scaffolding.



**Midshipmen from RPI could be found all over the ship cleaning, painting and hauling equipment from storage back to their display positions.**

**The education crew is getting ready for the ship's tenth season.** We're lucky to have just about all of last year's volunteer guides returning for yet another summer of giving tours. We're also happy to welcome back **Penny Welbourn** and **Bill Goralski**, two volunteers who missed out on last season. We also have two new student guides, **April Maser** and **Jessica Flach**. April is a history and anthropology major at SUNY Albany and Jessica is a history and criminal justice major at Hudson Valley Community College. They'll take their places alongside our other student guides: **Mike Collins**, **Robert DeRanieri**, **David Pitlyk** and **Greg Sleasman**. The guides will be meeting on the ship this weekend for refresher sessions and to find out what's new and exciting on the SLATER this year, especially Erik Collin's technical marvel in CIC. It's also our chance to remind the guides that they're what makes the SLATER come alive to visitors, and what a great job they've done these last ten years.

**A lot of SLATER work goes on away from the ship, sometimes in far distant places.**

About a mile south Larry "**Rocky**" **Rockwood** spent most of his winter in a large unheated shed at **Scarano's Boatyard**. He has gone over the whaleboat plank by plank checking for dry rot, and worked with Scarano's crew to make sure that the whaleboat will be with us and serviceable for years to come. Over at Crossgates Mall, **Les and Annette Beauchaine** continue to hammer out dogtags to raise money for the restoration. And out in San Francisco, **Tom Horsfall** continues his loving rebuild of the RCA TBL radio transmitter for radio central. **Will Donzelli** is planning a trip west and has offered to bring back some of the electronic parts scrounged from the Suisun Bay Reserve fleet. High on the priority list is the wave-guide for the SL radar so we can install it while the scaffolding is on the mast. SLATER continues to serve. There were two special ceremonies on board during March, even though, technically, we're closed to the public. Chief **Jason Redman** was commissioned an LDO and three sailors from the Navy Operational Support Center here in Albany were reenlisted. As **Jennifer Redman**, Chief Redman's wife, wrote when she made her request, "We would like it to be held in a special and meaningful place rather than a banquet hall or someone's home." We were pleased to be able to accommodate them.



**Sneak preview of next month's Slater Signals:  
Up goes the radar!**

**Far away DESA members in Michigan, Robert Marquardt of the USS SANDERS DE40, LaVerne Jensen of the USS MILLS and Marjorie Jensen, are one of the many groups that have been collecting and sending money in the form of "Pennies for the SLATER."** Reading down through all that the volunteers have accomplished in repairing the ship, you can see that their money is going to a good cause. And sometimes we never get the chance to meet our benefactors. I received word from our friend **Peter Papadakos** that a man, who never wanted his name known, **Tiny Cardenas**, the civilian XO at the Hawthorne Ordnance Depot in Nevada passed away four days ago after a very long battle with cancer. Thanks to his and Peter's efforts the SLATER received a couple of tons of inert ordnance that included depth charges, dummy three-inch projectiles and hedgehog projectiles. As Peter wrote "There had to be, for this to happen, one key-man, in the United States Department of Defense, who had enough trust and faith to allow us to flow these historic weapons to all the war-memorials that wanted them. For us at the Gyrodyne Foundation, he was our silent-champion, and a lasting friend for all time. Tiny may have worked for the Army for over 30 years, but his impact on U.S. Naval vessels and their restoration as war-memorials will be felt for decades to come. Fair winds and Following Seas, Tiny." To **Tiny Cardenas** and all the people like him who have been so quietly supportive over the years, we extend the heartfelt thanks from DE sailors everywhere.

**See you next month from the Albany side.**