



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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It's that time of the year when we should be getting ready to single up lines and cast off for Albany. But on this beautiful April 2nd we're tied to the wharf here in Rensselaer, listening to the echo of pilings being driven at our berth on the Albany side. This project is coming to fruition.

The long awaited 48" pipe for the monopiles arrived on the wharf at the Port of Albany on March 29th. That evening C. D. Perry's crew offloaded them from the truck onto their barge, and tugged it upriver to the SLATER mooring. They include four 48" sections of 1" thick steel pipe, each section 50' long. On Tuesday, they set the first section of pipe in place and began using a vibrator to get it started. They went as far as they could with the first section on and then set the second section. The weather was raw and rainy through the whole process. When they had vibrated the first parts of both pilings as far as they could, they shifted over to a huge diesel hammer that set on top of the piles. That really rattled **Rosehn, Linda and Frank Peter's** fillings.



The mooring pilings under construction. Photo by Rich Aubin

This is where I held my breath. If they hit an obstruction, the cost had the potential to escalate. You know, something like an old locomotive, debris from the old Dunn Bridge, a wrecked barge or the cement block holding down Jimmy Hoffa. The first 50' sections went down okay. I started to breathe a little easier.

Wednesday was spent welding the top halves onto both pilings. The north and south top

pieces were welded on and the weld joint coated as the joint will be below mud line. **Doug Tanner** monitored the welding as it was in progress. Then they started to pound again. Thursday was a beautiful spring day in Albany and they hammered. By Friday morning the aft dolphin was down as far as it needed to go. The crew moved the hammer to the forward dolphin. By noon, it was down as far as the aft one, and they were done driving piles. I could start to breathe again. The worst part was over.

Two rebar cages were fabricated off site. They were dropped in place on Good Friday. Right now it looks like they will pour the concrete Monday or Tuesday, April 5th or 6th. If they pour the 6th and the test cylinders are good on the 13th, that will mean they can set the fenders on the 13th or 14th of April and we can move the ship any time after that. We're cutting it close because we have our first overnight encampments scheduled for April 16th and 17th. We have taken the precaution of obtaining permission to do these encampments on the Rensselaer side if we do not get the ship moved in time.

When this phase of the work is completed we will have two breasting pilings with floating donut fenders that will take the place of the camels that hold the ship off the wall into deep water. These dolphins will replace the wooden "camel" floats that have been used for the past 12 years. The sixteen camels, each weighing seven tons, must be lowered by crane into the river and shackled together each spring. The reverse must occur each fall, removing the camels from the river. This has been accomplished by the SLATER's aging volunteer crew each year. This dangerous process will be eliminated with the installation of the dolphins.

When we can get additional funding, we will complete the project with five pilings head of the ship that will deflect ice into the middle of the river, and two mooring pilings adjacent to the seawall that will hold the bow and stern lines. Then we will be able to stay in Albany and operate year round. As for this year, when the construction is complete, the USS SLATER will be moved to Albany and will open to the public. This is expected to be sometime around April 21st. However, that may change pending construction or weather issues.



Earl Herchenroder and "Boats" Haggart stow the old boat fall line...



...while "Rocky" Rockwood and Dennis Nagi get the whaleboat ready for launching.

In the meantime, the crew aboard has been busily preparing for opening day. The four-year forward head project is finally nearing completion. The painting has been completed with the exception of the decks, and that will happen within the next few days. The shipfitters have only to install an exhaust line for the vacuum on the sand blast cabinet, and they will be out of there. **Gary Sheedy, Ken Kaskoun, Larry Williams and Barry Witte** are finishing up the incandescent overhead lighting and motor controller for the blower on the sand blast cabinet, as well as helping the engineers in B-3. Super **Dave Mardon** has been busy reinstalling all the small parts for the head he so beautifully restored at home including mirrors, soap dishes, electrical box covers and valves. The only downside has been listening to Sheedy whine about not making any progress on the reefer deck because of all the

work finishing up the head. The process of moving all the tools, welding gear and junk out of the head have been completed.

When Kevin Sage, our contract painter, finished spraying in the forward head, we sent him down to the aft machinery spaces for a week so Gus and Karl wouldn't feel neglected. Karl Herchenroder, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon and Gus Negus have continued to grab every loose deck hand to help with the prep work for spray painting. **Don Miller, Earl, Bosun Walt Stuart,** and new volunteer **Isaiah Wood** have all contributed to the restoration of the lower level of B-3. Their prep work was vital to enabling Kevin to move in with his spray gun. **Dick Walker** donated eight gallons of degreaser for cleaning the main engines. We worked on the lower levels, spraying out the overhead catwalks, the cable ways, and the main propulsion motors in B-4 that **Chris Fedden** and **Rocky** so lovingly scaled two winters ago. Our boys received some unexpected support from the Navy. MMC/SS **Ronnie Cervone** showed up with group of ten CPOs from Ballston Spa to do a day of community service on Good Friday. Ronnie was joined by MMC/SS **Eric Hawley**, LNC/SW **James Conner**, EMC/SS **David Machinportatta**, EMCS/SW **Tom Siglin**, MMCM/SW **Bob Sampson**, ETCM/SS **Bob Martin**, and ETCM/SS **Bruce Talbot** (CMC). They uncovered all the guns for us, folded all the canvas, and then went to work for Gus. They did a lot of touch up painting in the aft machinery spaces where there had been over spray from the white that was used.



Kevin Sage spraying out the CPO head forward...



... and the main propulsion motors in B-4.

With the advent of decent weather, Rocky has broken away from the engine room and is back working on the whaleboat. He's got a good head start on caulking and painting the inboard side. He's found a couple of dry-rotted ribs that he is replacing. He's also found a partner, now that we have **Dennis Nagi** back. **Boat's Haggart** finally got the replacement line for the boat falls and spent two weekends re-reeving them. He has also renewed all the davit guys, including replacing the wooden blocks with steel that will stand up to the weather better, and replaced all the monkey ropes. This was all done during some pretty cold days topside.



Doug Tanner beating "Super Dave" **Mardon** for not being able to read a yard stick.



"Battleship Mike" **McEnteggart** paints the forward hatch.

Chris Fedden, **Clark Farnsworth** and **Gene Jackey** have been working on the depth charge reload davits. **Tim Benner** and **Dave Mardon** started the prep work on the water system to make sure we had no freeze breaks over the winter. We'll need it for our first overnight encampment scheduled for April 16th. So far it looks like it was drained down okay. We also owe a debt of gratitude to CPO **Bernie Smith** who, in addition to his Monday messcook duties, has covered for Tanner on several Saturdays when Doug was out of town.



Down in the engineroom **Mike Dingmon** touching up gray trim...



... as **Gus Negus** touches up the deck gratings in B-3.

Erik Collin plays a key role on getting the ship prepped for opening day. Our resident "neat freak" has begun the process of going through each space with a vacuum cleaner and getting all the accumulated dirt off the bulkheads, decks and tops of the piping. He doesn't get near as much support and appreciation from the crew for his efforts to maintain SLATER as a museum, as opposed to a ship undergoing an overhaul. He is in the process of renewing the nonskid on all the ladders, touching up the bulkheads and repainting all the interior decks. He's been making a lot of trips to the paint store. And way back aft, collections manager **Katie Kuhl** and her intern **Sarah Worden** are working through the museum space, cleaning lockers and putting newly acquired artifacts on display. Katie's immediate

problem is that she misplaced our copy of "Ship of Shame" much to the disappointment of many of her friends who are anxious to screen it with her.

New Education Coordinator Linda Wruck has been getting oriented and dealing with her to-do list for spring. She has a long list so she'll be looking for help. She has to prep the Briefing Room for public use, which means stowing a whole lot of boxes that have accumulated there over the winter. Then there's the shore head, which needs repainting inside, and stowing all the shackles we dumped in there on camel day. There's setting up the shipboard displays in Officers Country and in the berthing compartments. Also, there's updating the donor boards, rigging the tent on the Observation Deck, and setting up informational monthly meetings for the volunteers. Oh, and having all the new guides trained by April 16th.



Education Coordinator Linda Wruck gets "The word" according to Tom "Stretch" McLaughlin.

We held our spring orientation meeting and invited all the old guides back. The old crew filled up the messdeck--**Jim Kuba, Les Beauchaine, Jack Madden, Glenn Harrison, "Stretch" McLaughlin, Jim Gelston, Bob Bull, Bill Scharoun, Floyd Hunt, Bob Bull, Joe Burke, Erik Collin, Leo Baehler, Alan Fox, Paul Czesak, Bob Dawson, Russ Ferrer, Paul Guarnieri, Grant Hack, Ken Kaskoun, Dennis Nagi, Gordon Lattey, Steve Long, Chuck Marshall, Nelson Potter, Chuck Teal and Dick Walker.** We have several new faces. One of our newest volunteers "**Battleship Mike**" McEnteggart has signed on for tour guide duty. We also have new interns **Greg Fox, Julianne Madsen, Matt Drescher, Gary Gustin and Jessica Munsch.** They join

returning interns **Heather Maron and Joe Delberta.** To all the new faces, welcome aboard.

Once again, my January was for naught. If you remember, I spent most of the month working on federal appropriation applications. I submitted six, and thus far have received five rejections. Only two actually notified us. For the remainder I had to go to their websites to see what projects they had submitted and we were not among them. The names are omitted in the hope that they will look more kindly on us in 2012. More and more I get the feeling that we're on our own with this project. It's a good thing I'm getting used to rejection.

Again, I want to put out a reminder about the Field Day Schedule for spring of 2010. The HUSE Crew will be aboard April 25th to April 30th. They have space available, so if you'd like to "turn to" with them, contact **George Amandola** at Gamand@aol.com Their main project will be chipping and painting the fo'c's'le, weather permitting. Once again the Michigan crew is full up, so there's no point in giving you **Ron Zarem's** phone number. Their main project will be repainting the starboard side of the hull. For both groups, bad weather means turn to in the aft machinery spaces. If you plan further ahead than I do, the dates for the fall field day week will be September 26th to October 1st, so be thinking about that. If you're interested in the fall, contact me directly at tim@uss Slater.org

April seems to be the month for productions showcasing events of World War II. "In the Mood" will be at The Egg, an Albany performing arts venue, on April 14. According to their website,

"In the Mood is the 1940's Big Band Theatrical Swing Dance Revue that celebrates America's GREATEST GENERATION through the music of Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, Harry James, Erskine Hawkins, The Andrews Sisters, Frank Sinatra and other greats of the 1940's. Featuring a company of 19 on stage, including the In the Mood Singers and Dancers with the sensational String of Pearls Big Band Orchestra, the show's music arrangements (42 songs in all), costumes and choreography are as authentic as it gets!"

You can follow up with a revival of "South Pacific" at Proctors in Schenectady, April 14-18. Everyone's familiar with the story by James Michener and the musical by Rodgers and Hammerstein. This Lincoln Center Theatre production declares:

"This masterful reinvention is unlike any other production of the show. With a world-class creative team, a superb cast, and a large lush orchestra playing the original orchestrations. The beloved score's songs include "Some Enchanted Evening," "I'm Gonna Wash That Man Right Outa My Hair," "This Nearly Was Mine" and "There is Nothin' Like a Dame." This is the **SOUTH PACIFIC** you will remember for a lifetime."

And, to top it off, head to the Palace Theater in Albany the evening of April 19 to see "Guns of Navarone" on the big screen. Starring Gregory Peck, Anthony Quinn, and David Niven, this action film follows Allied commandos during WWII, plotting to destroy German guns. And, of course, you might just catch a glimpse of SLATER near the end. Yes, this movie was filmed in 1961 while SLATER was in service with the Greek Navy.



Stan Murawski with his HAM gear.

Finally, one of our most dedicated shipmates crossed the bar for the last time on the morning of April 6th. Stan Murawski died peacefully in his home following a long term battle with cancer. His wife Linda and Stan's two dogs were at his side. As you know through this newsletter, Stan had been battling cancer for several years. Stan had never been in the Navy, but took to the ship like a real Sailor. Our main insulation tech/radioman/lasagna chef had always bounced back. Several of us had been down to see him, and Jerry Jones and Clark Farnsworth stopped by the night before he died. Linda brought him down to the ship on the last Thursday in March for a look at our progress, and had been

planning to bring Stan down for the move, but that was not to be. Our thoughts and prayers are with Linda through this difficult time.

See you next month.