

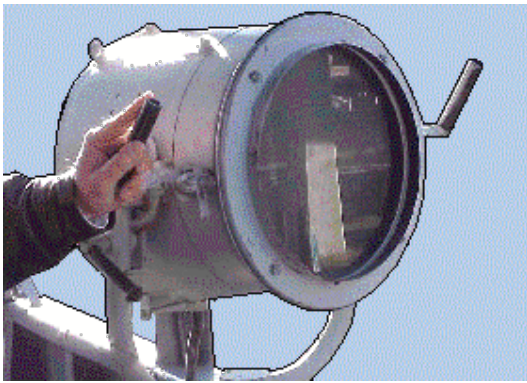
SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER
Volunteers

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In a month of maritime problems, SLATER seems to be surviving unscathed. A tanker hit bottom in the Hudson, USS GUARDIAN grounded near the Philippines, and there was the CARNIVAL TRIUMPH fire. **Gary** and **Sharon Sheedy** made their annual cruise on Royal Caribbean's EXPLORER OF THE SEAS. When Gary heard on the news that a ship had an engine room fire, was drifting helplessly and that the crew was suffering under unspeakable conditions with no electricity, cold food and no toilets, he was sure that SLATER had made the news again. On the flip side, we didn't know which ship he was on and, knowing his luck, we all assumed it was CARNIVAL TRIUMPH, and there was concern for their well-being. A compassionate **Tim Benner** called Sheedy on his cell phone and offered to FedEx him our port-a-john.

Our museum collections manager Heather Maron was mesmerized by the drama. She posted on her Facebook page "I can't stop watching the updates on the Carnival Triumph disaster. It's like witnessing the most drawn out train wreck. Raw sewage dripping down the walls? I'll stick to SLATER where the food is hot and the bathroom business stays outside." Kind of makes you appreciate the few amenities we have aboard our little ship. A Facebook post showing a snow covered port-a-john seat received the most comments we've ever had for a single post. I'm not sure if this is a reflection on the level of humor among our Facebook friends, or a reflection of the sympathy they have for our working conditions. For her part I believe the high point of Heather's SLATER week is Tuesday morning when the port-a-john is serviced.

But back to the business at hand. I'm not going to bore myself by checking, but I bet if I look back at February SIGNALS for the past fifteen years, this month I'm always crying the same song. We're back to crunch time. Suddenly our winter is almost over and we're wondering where it went.



Bill Wetterau, Tommy Moore, Earl Herchenroder, and Bill Siebert have been fighting the battle of the expansion joint.

The galley is coming back together, and a lot of guys have been working extra days to make that happen. On

February 2nd **Doug Tanner, Tim Benner** and **Super Dave** started fitting in the new steel plate on the port bulkhead. The following Monday **Gene Jackey** ground out and fit a piece in the galley overhead where the deck had rotted out. That same day Ron Mazure scaled under the sink and Super Dave continued welding on the plate Doug fitted Saturday. We had Earl Herchenroder and Mark Gardiner scaling down in the Electronics Shop below the messdeck. Clark Farnsworth fabricated two pieces of backing bar that Doug needed for the expansion

joint and Smitty served chili dogs. The engineers, **Ken Myrick**, **Karl Herchenroder**, **Mike Dingmon**, **Gary Lubrano** and **Gus Negus** spent the day cleaning out B-1 and B-2. They are sorting through scrap metal that we plan to have **Dick Walker** take to salvage so the Engineers can have some money for lube oil and antifreeze that they need. **Tommy Moore** is back with us one day a week; with limited use of his right arm, he painted the backing bars for the expansion joint rubber. **Bill Wetterau** spent several days under the galley sinks grinding and scaling. In fact, a lot of guys have spent a lot of time under the sinks over the past couple months.



"Super Dave" Mardon welding up the starboard base of the expansion joint.



And here's the finished product, running across the galley overhead.

Saturday the 16th was another productive Saturday. The shipfitters made significant progress fitting the last pieces in the galley bulkhead and began the process of seal welding the new plate inside and out. The forward section was difficult to work because of the close proximity of the B-1 hatch. As Benner observed, in a real shipyard they would have cut the hatch right flush with the deck to access the bulkhead and then weld the hatch back in. The electrical gang made good progress installing new electrical box tags, **Gary Sheedy** finished sandblasting in the reefer deck's starboard chill box and **Earl Herchenroder** just about finished scaling in the ET shop. **Erik** detailed **Bob and Thomas Scian** to pump out the shaft alleys, and **John Thompson** competed the drawers he fabricated to stow the power tools in the tool room.

By the end of the month, Tanner, Jackey, Benner and Mardon pretty much had all the metal work done. After some experimentation by Tanner and Sheedy, they figured out the best way to get the rubber gasket back in the expansion joint, and left **Earl, Bill Wetterau** and **Bill Siebert** with the task of punching 400 holes in the rubber and putting in the backing bars and the 400 nuts and bolts. Tanner conned Wetterau into the project by telling Bill how great it was to work with somebody who didn't whine about the cold, whine about sparks falling into his shoes, didn't need to use the head every thirty minutes or take a coffee break every hour. Poor Bill fell for Tanner's smoke and put in several days of overtime with Siebert and Herchenroder to get the job done.

Tanner's next big challenge is getting the sinks back together. All the drain plumbing needs to be replaced, so that project is in the works. Then it's rebuilding the shelving and putting the stainless steel sheathing back up and we're open for business.

Don Miller, Ron Mazure, Earl Herchenroder and Mark Gardiner have all put in time scaling the electronics workshop below the messdeck. This was a project that was started last year, but put on hold when we opened for the season because of the close proximity to the tour route. They just about have the scaling finished and that will be on the list of places to be spray painted next month. Then, hopefully we'll finally have a place to sort and stow all the vacuum tubes we've been given over the years.



Having finished his sandblasting of the starboard chillbox, Gary Sheedy set about polishing the copper refrigeration cooling coils. Amid the dust and grime, even he was having self-doubt about undertaking the project. But he's now in the process of buffing out the copper and when he finishes the polishing, SLATER will have the shiniest and most beautiful refrigeration cooling coils in the historic fleet. A Facebook picture of Gary working on the coils got 38 "Likes." The following day a picture of the completed expansion joint got 50 "Likes." So much for Gary's popularity.

"I'd rather be on a cruise ship." Gary Sheedy polishing the reefer coils.

Boats Haggart and his deck force of Nelson Potter, Paul Guarnieri and Bob Scian have tended lines all winter and made sure the chaffing gear was in place to handle the seven-foot tide. They have also been restoring one of

Engine room progress.



our wooden Jacob's Ladders. It's just about ready for varnish. Nelson has been repainting life rings and labeling them "USS SLATER DE766." We figure that should make them popular for photo props with the tourists this summer. Boats has the whaleboat ready to lower onto the dock so Rocky can repaint the outboard side, but as I write I'm debating the wisdom of putting it on the dock, because we have the potential to move back across in a couple of weeks. The ice is pretty much gone off the river, so it looks like we should be able to make an early crossing again this year.



NPTU students have been back in the bilges.



Ken Myrick and Mike Dingmon work to get the emergency diesel back on line.

In B-3, Rocky spent the winter degreasing and needle gunning main engine number 3. Karl Herchenroder has been down there with him working up an alternate cooling solution for number three ship's service generator. Deterioration inside the tank we had been using for the cooling water is forcing us to reconsider how to best run the salt water side of the cooling system. We've got a new gang of Navy personnel who have volunteered to help in the bilges. **Joe Furtado, Andrew Roger, Ryan Sisk, Jim Donnally and Jason Vinton** are the latest group to decide that working in the SLATER's bilges is more fun than doing whatever it is they normally do up at the site while waiting for classes to start. Down in B-4 **Gus Negus, Gary Lubrano, Mike Dingmon and Ken Myrick** are reassembling the emergency diesel cooling system. They did some bench welding on the reservoir tank and now are putting it all back together. I anticipate a test firing in the next couple of weeks in preparation for the trip back across.



Mike Wyles and Jerry Jones admire the new E-Bay bearings for the TBL MG set.

Up in the radio room, Jerry Jones, Joe Breyer, Mike Wyles and Bob Kibbey have been reassembling the motor generator for the TBL. They replaced the bearings with a new set that Jerry bought off Ebay. It was somewhat of a surprise that the ball bearings in a 70-year-old generator are still readily available. As I look in at their work bench, the 'auxiliary' voltage generator section is back in one piece and ready to be mounted in its place as part of the motor/generator unit. The new desk for LOP3 (local operating Position 3) is being fabricated by Chris Hanley's high school shop students and should be ready for installation before we move back to Albany. One of our original

WW2 TCS-12 low frequency radio transmitter/receiver sets will be installed at LOP3 ready to operate on the 40 and 80 meter 'ham' bands as WW2DEM. We're starting to threaten Jerry and, in four weeks, Erik and I will do our annual cleaning and rearrangement of his compartment for him if he doesn't have it squared away for visitors.



New tags for the electrical panels.

Ed Zajkowski and Barry Witte have a joint project going. Here's an interstate project that has been going on for a while now. Down in Pennsylvania, Ed Zajkowski has been researching and scanning the blueprints for labeling our electrical and piping systems. He emails them to Barry Witte, who has been producing them and installing them with the help of his students. They've been doing a magnificent job of restoring the lighting switch panels in B-4.

Through it all Erik Collin has done what he can to keep the place tidy in preparation for the big clean up. Over

the winter he's kept busy with gunsight restoration and what touch up and deck painting he could do away from the areas under destruction. As the snow started to melt Erik went through his annual ritual of placing buckets under all the 01 level scuppers to catch the melt off so he has some water to clean with. His favorite helper is **Thomas Scian** who has been working his way through officer's country with a vacuum cleaner. Most everything else is on hold because, until Sheedy finishes his sandblasting on the reefer deck and the shipfitters finish grinding in the galley, the dirt and grime will continue to settle on everything. We're looking to have the RPI midshipmen back on March 9th and we have a long list of clean-up projects waiting for them.



Heather Maron accessioning more artifacts.

On February 25th, Heather attended the Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan Public Meeting number two at the Main Branch of the Albany Public Library. The meeting was an effort to have the public contribute towards determining priority order of the projects included in the proposal. The proposal does not ensure the funding or completion of any of the included projects, but it is a first step in the direction of a more accessible, visitor-friendly Albany waterfront. Heather has successfully gotten SLATER onto the list of proposed projects, which includes a proposal for permanent mooring, improved parking, and a new visitors' center. While competing against other proposed projects such as green infrastructure

and a new rowing facility, there was some concern about how much local public support we could garner at the meeting. Heather reported back positively though, with the great news that once the projects were described to the public and voting was complete, SLATER improvements came out third out of eight. We are honored to be taking part in the process of improving the city's waterfront, and even more excited to have such local support.



"We drove ninety minutes for this?" Bob and Thomas Scian drying out the shaft alley.

Heather has started the process of preparing for the 2013 tour season.

The 2013 kick-off meeting will be a pizza party on the ship Friday March 22nd at noon. If you will be there RSVP to Heather at collections@ussslater.org. We'll advise you as to where the ship is. She has been interviewing for interns and has several promising applicants, but we need more volunteers. Age is taking its toll on the ranks of our volunteer tour guides, so we're looking for replacements to fill the gap. If you are getting this and live in a two hour radius of the ship, please consider contacting Heather to learn more about being a tour guide, which can have as little commitment as one day a month. We've got several long distance regulars who deserve special thanks for coming

during this time of high gas prices. These include **Tim Benner** who comes in from Glens Falls, **Bob and Thomas Scian** who come up from Monticello, and our long distance king, **Tom Cline** who drives all the way from Binghamton every Sunday. Somehow, on the maintenance side, we always seem to have new volunteers stepping up to take the place of those who have to step to the sidelines. We need more of that on the interpretative side, which surprises me. Who wouldn't want the opportunity to work with Heather as opposed to working with me? Think about it. We probably need you.

Start thinking about the 2013 Work Weeks. The Michigan Spring work week will begin on Sunday May 5th and run through Friday May 10th. The HUSE Crew will be aboard May 19th -24th. If that week works out for you and you want to give us a hand, contact **George Amandola**. And, our Fall Work Week is scheduled for October 6-11. So mark your calendars and plan to take time off. We can always use all the help we can get, and sons/daughters and grandsons/daughters are welcome. However, we require that youngsters be at least 12 years old to participate and must be accompanied by an adult relative. But it's a great chance for an intergenerational experience. And isn't that one of the reasons we're here?

This is important: The City is collecting input for their Local Waterfront Redevelopment Plan.

We have been fortunate enough to be included as a proposed project within the plan, but we need your help to become a priority project. The SLATER project, as outlined in the Plan currently includes the provision for the year round mooring for the SLATER, a permanent shoreside visitor's center, and improved signage to get people to the ship. Please take the survey. .

Finally, again I would be remiss if I didn't thank all of you who have donated this past winter to help keep the project solvent and moving forward. You all did a good job "keeping the volunteers warm" through another Albany winter. We like to think spring is just around the corner. Don't forget to "Like" us on Facebook. We post updates almost every day.

See you next month.