



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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I took two weeks off this month. I was somewhat worried about leaving, because there are only three of us on permanent staff, and our interpretation coordinator, **Shanna Hopson**, was planning to take one of the same weeks off to attend the wedding of a close friend in Montana. In addition to that, my dependable maintenance backups, **Doug Tanner** and **Barry Witte**, were both planning to be away during that same time period. That left **Rosehn Gipe** pretty much alone, to run the whole dog and pony show.



For once I made sure that everyone had my cell phone number and that my cell phone was charged and on my person at all times. Those who know me know that this is most unusual behavior, because most of the time I can't even find my cell phone. Thus, it was with a sense of panic that, when I arrived at our cabin in the woods, I found that I had no cell phone reception. I had no computer and thus no Internet access, so I was truly off

Boats Haggart and Walt Stuart rig the rat guards.

the grid. I immediately called and left the house phone number on the ship's answering machine, and Rosehn's cell phone. Having done everything I could to make sure that I was available to solve any problems that might come up, I stood by and waited for a call. That call never came.

The fact that this place operates smoothly, with the absence of two thirds of the regular staff, is a testament to Rosehn, as well as the interns and volunteers who make up this crew. In fact, many of the volunteers suggested that it runs smoother in my absence. It may be appropriate here to say a few words about **Rosehn Gipe**. I've always felt that if I could do my job in anonymity, I'd be perfectly content to let the volunteers take the credit for any success we might experience. But the nature of the business requires that somebody be the "Front Man." My point is that as our business manager, Rosehn, carries this desire for anonymity even further than I do. All she wants is to be allowed to do her job, and to be respected for her competence.

I first met Rosehn when she applied to be a tour guide at the USS KIDD, in Baton Rouge. I hired her because she was the first person I ever met who used the word "organized," to describe herself. She stayed with us for a few years, and moved on to a position with the National Music Museum in South Dakota, and we went our separate ways. It was sometime in 2003 that she contacted me and said she'd been following our progress online through SLATER SIGNALS, and if we ever had an opening she'd be interested in working for us.



Along the way she had completed her teaching certification, gotten an MBA, worked for Edward Jones gaining investing experience, and gained additional curatorial expertise. This is an individual who reads IRS Tax codes for recreation, and if you ask her, she'll let you know that gambling and bribery are reportable forms of income. I don't think anyone could have come into a small museum better prepared to handle all the business aspects involved.

But there was always the fear that I was inviting a person to relocate across country, when I couldn't be sure of our financial viability. The need to get our house in order overcame that fear.



Our welding team of Doug Tanner, Tim Benner and Dave Mardon fabricating a cover for the B-3 vent space.

At the time, my admin was a mess, accounting was outsourced, and bills weren't getting paid on time. I knew she was just the person to take charge of the administration and pull things together. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to put this organization on the right track. She's far exceeded my expectations. Most important, she has played a major role in ensuring the financial viability that I once had questions about. Among the laundry list of tasks that constitutes her job description, she answers the phone, books the tours, does the daily reports, generates the monthly financial statements, keeps me focused on what I need to be doing and keeps up with the myriad of governmental reporting requirements that all small businesses must deal with.

It's also a testament to our interns and volunteers, who have the initiative and desire to keep things running without any direct supervision. In my absence, **Claire Burgon** had posted and completed a stack of thank you letters for me to sign. Our Sunday team, led by **Vince Knuth**, continues to garner rave reviews on "Trip Advisor." The summer edition of *TRIM BUT DEADLY* got mailed, and was waiting for me at my house when I got home. And **Shanna Hopson** figured out how to work with **Thomas Scian** to keep up with the Facebook posts, so no one ever knew I was absent. It has been quite a busy month, with visiting summer camps from the area. Large groups have come to visit on a daily basis and take a tour of the ship, leaving with a new appreciation of their air conditioners!



The memorial service for Tom Schriner.

The month of July began with a reunion of the Schriner family, who came in from all over the country to honor Michigan volunteer and former DE Sailor, the late Tom Schriner. Tom was a regular with the Michigan Chapter work weeks, as a welder and cook, for many years. On July 6th, his son Joe organized a gathering of the whole Schriner clan to remember Tom in a memorial aboard USS SLATER. It was a wonderful and moving event. Thanks Joe, for putting it all together.

Zach, one of our high school volunteers, worked this month on tour duty as well as some projects, helping Shanna in the Special Collections space. He worked on many organizational tasks, preparing for the day when maintenance is finished and we can get the space set up again. While on tour duty, Zach's visitors had this to say: "Our tour guide, Zach, was very knowledgeable and informative. I have taken the tour several times before, but it's been a few years, and I learn something new every time. Zach knew so much about the ship, he didn't leave our group with very many questions, but when we did have one, he knew the answer. He should be commended for his good work."

TripAdvisor reviews show people are impressed with our tour guides! "Tour was awesome and tour guide, Dan was extremely knowledgeable. I have driven past the ship thousands of time before stopping and am so happy I did." "The tour was fascinating,



Our Sunday duty officer Vince Knuth points out details of the wardroom.



Tour guide Will Trevor explains the depth charge projectors to visitors.

the tour guide, Jon, was interesting and knowledgeable, and I would recommend this to anyone who wants to further their knowledge about the realities of what it meant to fight on a destroyer escort. You will learn a lot."

We also had three DE veterans from WWII visit this month. They were Donald Hansel from USS HUSE DE-145, John J. Hagan from the USS EARL V. JOHNSON DE-702, and Nick Dardes from USS BUCKLEY DE-51. Nick stayed and visited with our volunteers and tour guides after his tour. He was a gunner's mate on the BUCKLEY, when she rammed U-66.

On the 23rd our own Will Trevor gave a presentation on the Battle of the Atlantic to an enthusiastic audience, primarily filled with veterans and their families, at Chatham Public Library.

We also have a display set up at the Chatham Public Library, so if you are in the area, stop by and take a look! If you'd like your local library, in the Capital Region, to have a display or presentation, have the librarian contact us at info@usslater.org.

On the maintenance side, in the absence of Karl, Doug, Barry, and me, it fell on Thomas Scian's shoulders to keep the NPTU Sailors working. The progress with the main deck scaling and the painting in B-3 is a testament to his efforts. The repainting of main engine number four is finished, and with the completion of spraying out the valve covers, number three will be finished as well.



NPTU students experience an Old Navy whaleboat ride.

We've tried to give the NPTU Sailors a more varied experience than just chipping paint, bilge crawling, and painting engines. Mike Dingmon and Larry Williams made sure all the students got the chance to experience an old Navy style whaleboat ride.



Barry Witte supervises NPTU students in a hose drill.

Barry Witte also took advantage of their presence to test run the #3 bilge & fire pump. For us, this is a big deal, because for the first time since returning from Greece, the ship has its own, internal ability to pump water. A section of firehose was charged with a fog nozzle, and all the sailors were given the opportunity to direct a stream of water over the side, and shift the nozzle from straight stream to fog.

This achievement is the result of more than two years of effort by the engineers, RPI midshipmen led by Tulsa Scott, and Colonie HS technology department students and instructor Chris Hanley. The pump ran flawlessly for twenty minutes while NPTU trainees took turns practicing, using a Navy style fire nozzle under the supervision of one of their CPOs. The packing leaks a bit, but that was apparently how the pump was designed, giving the Sailors the additional opportunity to dewater the B-3 bilge pocket when the exercise was complete.



Barry Witte ascends the USCGC TANEY's mast in Baltimore.



Progress on the emergency diesel distribution panel.

Barry also did some off site work, sharing his expertise with Paul Cora and the Historic Ships Baltimore team. While in Baltimore for a conference, Barry worked to assist on the Coast Guard Cutter TANEY. The main project of the day was scoping out the AN SPS-64 surface search radar on TANEY. The goal was to see what should be done to get the antenna rotation motor wired up and running again. While they are not quite there yet, they are much closer to this goal as a result of Barry's help and expertise. Barry also worked with TANEY Ship's Manager **Ryan Szimanski** to trace out and fix a ground in the ship's Sick Bay, successfully test the 120VAC ground detector on the ship's main switchboard, and survey several fuse and junction boxes for "hot spots," using an infrared sensor.

Back on board SLATER, Barry has continued the restoration of the B-4 emergency diesel generator distribution panel, with an assist from Jim Lenden, Ken Powers, Tulsa Scott, and David Altman. Doug Tanner and his shipfitters, Earl Herchenroder, Dave Mardon, Gene Jackey, and Tim Benner got the machine shop workbench back together. So the expansion joint job is finally complete. They are now knee deep in the restoration of the adjacent B-3 ventilation space. Like every project we tackle, the wasted metal is more extensive than we anticipated, and the length of time this project will take is growing. **Boats Haggart** realized a dream he's had for several years, when he got the rat guards rigged while I was away.



Cathy Wheat and Angelo Bracco repair signal flags.

Angelo Bracco, Boats, Cathy Wheat, and Walt Stuart are working on the signal flags, making repairs, and reorganizing the flag bags. When the weather is cool enough, **Gary Sheedy** will continue his work back aft. He recently completed the insulation work in the laundry. And, if it ever stops raining, we plan to paint out the portside of the main deck.

Our thoughts go out to several volunteers who've been on the binnacle list. Danny Statile, Chris Fedden, and Steve Klauck are all dealing with different forms of cancer. Founding Board Member **John Cosgrove**, in Washington D.C., is still dealing with the effects of pneumonia. And **Les and Annette Beauchaine** have been dealing with separate issues, resulting from two separate falls. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all these wonderful volunteers.



Chow call as Tim Benner, Cathy Wheat and Dave Mardon enjoy a Smitty lunch.

So that's the wrap up for July. We'll see if things go as smoothly in August when Rosehn goes on vacation. Don't forget the donate button on our homepage www.ussslater.org and to like us on Facebook for daily updates.

See you next month.