



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers

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I'm telling you, Rizzuto hasn't written any original copy since 2010.

After writing this gossip rag monthly for nineteen years, "My Friend" Tim Benner is convinced that when it comes time to write copy, I just look back to an old edition, like January 2007. Then I just cut and paste, change the date and names of the volunteers to reflect the current and, bingo, another issue gets posted. And here it is, January 31. It's snowing, which has been an unusual event in Albany this winter. I wandered

over to the office, and **Rosehn** asked me, "How's SIGNALS coming?" You mean it's the end of the month already? Well, it is the end of the month, already. Let's see what I can come up with. I'll leave it to you to decide whether or not Benner's theory is on the mark.

This month, it's been all about the trailer rehabilitation. So much so, that I think the ship is starting to feel neglected. **Doug Tanner** and his dedicated team of shipfitters, **Earl Herchenroder**, **Tim Benner**, **Super Dave Mardon**, and **Gene Jackey**, have spent the month working as carpenters. They picked up where they left off last spring, by the store door. Most of the supporting beams and floor joists were weakened by wood rot, so they began the process of removing the damaged wood, splicing in new support, then jacking the trailer up against the new wood to level it. They checked everything with a laser level, then tied everything together with bolted-in 2"x12" stiffeners, and removed the jacks. A vinyl drip edge has been added above the stiffeners, to keep the water from causing the problem to recur, at least until I retire.



Doug Tanner spent most of the month under the trailer thanks to a mild winter.



Navy volunteers scaling bunk lockers in aft berthing.

There were several sections of subfloor that had to be replaced in the Briefing Room, and we purchased and installed a new door for that space, too. All that remains to be done is completion of the plywood skirt. At least in this phase of the rehabilitation. Much of the T1-11 siding needs replacement, almost all the window molding is shot, and the windows are questionable. The gutters need to come down, and the molding strip along the roof

needs to be checked. And did I mention that we need to bring in a contractor to install a new rubber roof? It's problematic as to how much of this can get done by opening day in April. All of this progress is thanks to an incredibly mild winter. There's no ice on the river. But the real measure of how I gauge a winter is the number of times I have to shovel my driveway. I haven't had to shovel my driveway once this season.

About now, you're probably wondering, "Why don't they take all that Winter Fund money they've received and just



MMN3 Autumn Corser getting instruction on the use of the chop saw.

buy a new trailer?" That is a reasonable question. Aside from the fact that we're so frugal, we considered the cost, coupled with the effort of moving one out and a new one in. Then, we figured in the cost of making all of the sewer and water hook-ups, the electrical connections, and then outfitting it the way we want. And, we decided we'd rather spend all that money on the ship.



Ballston Spa Sailors have continued to support our restoration.

And believe it or not, we are spending some money on the ship. The contractors have started the ripout of the old fiberglass insulation in berthing space C-203-L. A reluctant **Gary Sheedy** has been overseeing that project, in addition to running the laundry and steering gear room restorations. He's had **Thomas Scian** grinding imperfections off the bulkheads and overhead. **Ron Mazure** and **Ron Prest** have been scaling in the supply office.

And, the **Ballston Spa NPTU Sailors** have been scaling out the bunk lockers. **Barry Witte** and the RPI Midshipmen have been removing old unoriginal electrical cables, and replacing armored cable where necessary. The contractors got all the old overhead insulation removed in one day, too.

Inside the trailer, amidst the hammering, sawing, and jacked up walls, preparing us for the 2017 season has continued. Business Manager Rosehn Gipe is designing ads, contracting advertising and brochure distribution, closing the financial books on 2016, filing grant applications, ordering supplies for all the many projects going on, proofing "Trim But Deadly," and managing payroll while the construction costs on the trailer pile up on her desk.

Our interpretation coordinator, Shanna Hopson, has written and mailed letters to area libraries, informing them about our Museum Pass program, Speakers Bureau, and Library displays. She has designed and mailed postcards to area schools and retirement communities, posted with area Universities about openings for tour guides, sent applications to interested students, and scheduled interviews. She is also constantly looking for ideas and materials to make that Special Collections space come together. And, since her first plan for the space was totally annihilated, she is developing a new plan!! Let's hope it works out this time!



Engineers Mike Dingmon and Gary Lubrano checking pump tolerances.

Both ladies stay busy, making sure every volunteer, staff, board member, and project has what they need to do their job. They do this while booking tours and overnights, answering e-mails and phone calls, and assisting visitors in the lot who want a tour. Repeating themselves every day, "No, sorry the ship is closed for the winter. We will re-open in April." "No, our website says we're closed. Google doesn't understand seasonal businesses, even though we've notified them a dozen times."**The snowbirds, Larry Williams, Angelo Bracco, and Walt Stuart**



The Coast Guard paid us two visits this month as both USCGC WIRE and HAWSER spent nights alongside.



Cleaning in the steering gear room. Cathy Wheat is in there somewhere.

volunteer and retired boilermaker, **Andy Sheffer**, is replacing the galley sink drains. Andy was a former submarine torpedoman. **Cathy Wheat** has been working for Sheedy, cleaning the steering gear compartment in preparation for painting. Doug keeps breakfast coming, including perking that special hazelnut coffee for **Gary Sheedy**.

have flown south for the winter. But elsewhere on the ship, work continues. **Guy Huse**, working inside the gun shack, has completed the disassembly of the gun 2 sightsetter. Chief firecontrolman, **Mike Marko**, has been cleaning up and restoring MK 14 gunsights at home. **Boats Haggart** has been painting blocks and making fenders. He says he's all caught up until spring. New



Planning the galley sink drain repair.

Barry Witte deserves kudos for repairing an annoying floating ground in our fire alarm system. I'd been getting late night calls for a month about a ground fault in our smoke detection system. Barry said it was easy to repair, once the system stayed grounded long enough for him to locate the problem. **Tommy Moore** has continued work in the forward motor room installing shelving on the lower level of the starboard side. Ultimately that

will be where we stow valves and plumbing fittings. The plan is to stow 440volt electrical spares on the upper level port side, 120 volt spares on the lower level port side, diesel engine spares on the upper level starboard side, with the plumbing spares below. It remains to be seen if I'll actually live long enough to see this level of organization achieved. With no running water aboard, **Smitty** provides noon chow with

his "Meals on Wheels" program. **Gordon Lattey** covered a couple of meals when both Smitty and Doug were away. **Jim Gelston** keeps the clocks wound, storekeeper Walker makes his weekly supply runs, and **Bob Callendar** keeps the record of the volunteer hours up to date. In that regard, we had a total of 16,121.5 volunteer hours in 2016, up a thousand hours from 2015. We have the Navy support from NPTU to largely thank for that.



If you haven't donated to the Winter Fund yet, we still need you!

Once again, we can't thank you all enough for your support of our Winter Fund Drive. Despite the loss of some of our core group of WWII DE Sailors, we are on track to do at least as well as last year. That's thanks to the support of all you Cold War Sailors, and the sons, daughters and grandchildren of the "Greatest Generation," as well as all of you who are so interested in history. If you haven't donated and want to support a lasting legacy to these gallant Sailors, we still need you. You can donate online or send a donation to USS SLATER, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY 12201-1926. Help keep a volunteer warm this winter. It's not over yet.

Both Doug Tanner and Super Dave Mardon celebrated birthdays this month, but the big shipboard event this month was the celebration of Chief Clark Farnsworth's 95th birthday. Tony Esposito drove to Scotia to pick Clark up at his house. Smitty prepared chow, and almost the entire crew gathered in the wardroom to honor our most senior and dedicated volunteer.

Clark was so touched by the show of friendship that he wrote us back and said,

"I do not, even now, know how to express my thanks for my birthday party last Monday. I know it was the culmination of a lot of people who all deserve my thanks. First I will start with you, Tim, and then Tony Esposito, who picked me up, Chief Smith, who I know set up that wonderful lunch, with Chief Dott to help, and so many others. I do, personally, want to thank the crew. So many I have known for years, who came down for lunch and to wish me a Happy Birthday. To all, my everlasting thanks. It was a wonderful day to remember. I have a lot of nice pictures to remember it by.

Sincerely yours,
Clark

How can we fail with shipmates like that?

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.



A lot of experience here as three Chiefs, Farnsworth, Dott and Smith gather in the wardroom.