



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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So, I'm sitting at my desk, surrounded by various piles of cash. Rosehn is away, representing us at the Historic Naval Ship Association Conference, at the Patriots Point Naval Museum, in Charleston, South Carolina. She's doing a presentation on internal controls for small businesses. As a result, **Shanna Hopson** and I are splitting some of her responsibilities in her absence. She will probably make a point of saying that if your Executive Director is Tim Rizzuto, don't trust him with cash. Rosehn handles her financial responsibilities with extraordinary diligence and accuracy, and I certainly want to live up to her standard.

I'm in unfamiliar territory. The process involves taking the receipts for three days, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, out of the deposit envelopes. I start by taking out the cash, counting it, and filling out a separate deposit ticket for each day, keeping everything in separate envelopes to take to the bank. The next step is to go into the change bag, pull out all of the large bills, and decide how many ones, fives, and rolls of coinage I need, to make up Rosehn's "Best Bet" and avoid a change shortage.



Our tour guides, such as Mike Marko and Bob Wheelock, bring USS Slater to life.

I prepare my list and then empty the donation boxes, a task Rosehn and I usually do together. Most of it is in ones and fives, so that solves most of my change problem. I begin swapping money around between the change, the fund, the cash drawer, and the donation box deposit. When that's done, I do a separate deposit ticket for the donation boxes. Then I wrap everything up and head off to the bank.

We use the KeyBank branch in Rensselaer, on the east side of the river, because it's usually quiet, they have free parking, and they are very friendly about making change. Not everyone is. There's a bit of a line this morning, as all the small business operators, like myself, are anxious to get their weekend cash in safe hands. Apparently they are shorthanded, because the branch manager is working a window, and when my turn comes, she handles my deposit. I explain that if my totals are off, it's because I'm only the Executive Director, and I'm not normally trusted with this level of responsibility. Surprisingly, all my totals are correct, and I leave with my four deposit tickets, and the change I couldn't make out of the donation boxes.

On the way back, I make a stop at the Schwab office, to drop off the contributions deposit—restoration and endowment. Apparently the bank has a surcharge if you deposit a large number of checks. Schwab does not have any limit on the number of checks you can deposit, so to save money, Rosehn deposits most of the checks there. There's no question about this deposit being correct, because Rosehn had prepared it before she left.



Bob Wheelock explains the function of the clinometer to Dawn Berndt.

The next stop is the post office. The mail box is pretty full. I go through it to make sure there is nothing that would require a trip to the window. There isn't, so I bundle it all back up into my satchel, and head back to the ship. Once aboard, I spread everything out on my desk and make separate piles of membership renewals, donations, 20th Anniversary tickets, bills, and junk mail. I bundle each group together and place them in a folder for Rosehn to handle when she gets back.



Charles Starks describes the pilothouse to another group of enthusiastic students.

I then put the deposit receipts, clipped to the respective daily reports and register tapes, and place them all in Rosehn's folder in chronological order, and lock everything away. As the last step, as I pick up the daily deposit envelopes to return them to the store for the coming week, a penny drops out of one of the envelopes and falls on to my desk. Oops.

Rosehn reported in from HNSA with some interesting observations. It seems that the bigger the ship, the more staff are sent to the conference. There are plenty of young, committed professionals in the historic ship business. USS SLATER has the best volunteer corps. And, everybody reads Signals.

This month, with school starting and summer tourist season in the rearview mirror, our guides have had time to catch their breath. The weather hasn't been any cooler, and tours haven't stopped, but we are catching up on our dusting and window cleaning chores. We have a couple weeks before the school field trips kick into gear.



CPO Selects from Ballston Spa doing maintenance on gun 33.

The first event of the month was the volunteer workday, by the Chief Selects of NPTU Ballston Spa. We had about thirty Chiefs supervising thirty Selects, so we had one-on-one supervision. They tackled several projects, including maintenance on the aft three-inch gun number 33, repainting the three-inch mount number 32, and cutting in and rolling out nonskid deck paint on the maindeck starboard side.

They also assisted **Barry Witte** with valve maintenance, cutting pipe for the seawall safety rail, and cleaning in the aft machinery spaces. Our thanks again go to **Art Dott** and **Chief Smith**, who put on "Smitty's famous lasagna" for them.



The following day, Ed Zajkowski rolled into town with another episode of "The Dream Team." Some of the projects included cleaning out all four of the galley drains, repairing a ruptured pipe in B-1, and welding on the new pier railing. The Dream Team also cooked three meals a day, welded new brackets on the main deck fuel oil overflow vents, and assisted visiting veteran members from the DESA convention. The crew consisted of **Ron Prest, Rick Espenshade, Bob Lally, Thomas Scian, Mark Petro, and Ed Zajkowski.** Somehow, Thomas also managed to paint out most of the starboard waterway that week.

Simultaneously with the return of the Dream Team, we hosted the 42nd Destroyer Escort Sailors Association convention here in Albany. Monday night, Board Chairman BJ Costello , President Tony Esposito, and I did a presentation at the Welcoming Wine and Cheese party. We did a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the most significant events of our four years in Manhattan, and our twenty years in Albany. Tuesday morning, we hosted the gents and ladies for a morning aboard the SLATER. That event was highlighted by whaleboat rides for anyone wishing to make the trip down and up the accommodation ladder. Our thanks to Coxswain **Larry Williams** and boat engineer **Mike Dingmon**, whose presences made the rides possible. **Karl Herchenroder** and **Mike Dingmon** deserve special kudos for getting the aft machinery spaces looking so good. Thursday morning was their Memorial Service aboard, complemented by the Slater Color Guard, and **Steve Stella** bugling live taps in honor of all the DESA members who have crossed the bar. That evening it was dining and dancing at the annual banquet. We know this may be the last visit to the SLATER for many of these veterans, and it was our honor to be able to show off the ship to them.



Some of our guests at the 42nd annual DESA Convention.



DE Vets had a chance to check out the restoration in aft machinery spaces.

Aside from the DESA convention, we've had an influx of WWII DE Sailors this month. William Robert Pictor visited one Saturday afternoon. He was a plankowner of the USS LEE FOX DE-65. He did his boot camp at Sampson, New York and became a radarman 2/c. He'll be 93 in November. He served aboard LEE FOX with his identical twin brother, Petty Officer 1st class Richard Pictor. He slept in aft berthing, while his brother was in forward berthing. He went through 18 Atlantic crossings, and was there when a hurricane exploded a hedgehog projectile on the mount. Ninety-four-year-old **George Martel**, pharmacists mate of the PAUL G. BAKER, was back aboard. Gunner's Mate **Phil Catalfamo**, off the USS CHAFFEE DE-230, continues to keep us supplied with coffee and pastries.

o **On the 23rd, we participated in Smithsonian Magazine's Museum Day Live!** Patrons could download a free ticket to any of the participating museums for this one day only. We had fifty-six visitors who came in as many of them leaving donations and supporting us by purchasing merchandise from the Ship's Store. Our first overnight took place on the 30th; we turned the ship over to our interns, **Austin and Merissa, and twenty-three Cub Scouts from Vernon, New York.** They enjoyed training the guns, exploring the compartments, sleeping in forward berthing, and having chow in the mess deck, not to mention swabbing the deck when they were finished eating!



The continuing project for the shipfitters has been the seawall safety rail.

On the maintenance side of the operation, the big news has been the progress on the seawall safety railing. **Danny Statile** and **Earl Herchenroder** have been fabricating four-foot sections of railing on the ship and hauling them ashore. Out in the parking lot, **Doug Tanner**, **Dave Mardon**, **Tim Benner**, **Gene Jackey** and **Andy Sheffer** have been welding the sections in place on Saturdays and Mondays. The section north of the aft gangway is complete,

and we only have about 20 feet to go on the south side of the gangway.



Danny Statile fabricates another section of safety rail for the seawall.

Also, a lot of work has been happening on the 01 level. Aft of the superstructure, **Ron Prest** and **Bill Holt** have been doing the final prep work on the deck. That way it will be ready to receive a nonskid topcoat during the upcoming fall workweek. This involves sanding down rusty areas, feathering edges, then applying two coats of Corroshield, followed by a coat of red primer and a coat of green primer. Then, we wait a month, and if any rust

pops through, we do it again. We started this project in the spring, and we should be able to wrap it up in a week. **Tommy Moore** has been scaling the undersides of the director tubs, which is essentially overhead work, so he deserves kudos for tackling that job. **Larry "The Legend" Williams** has been repainting and detailing the electrical and sound powered phone boxes on the 01 level. Forward, on the 01 level, **Guy Huse** has the elevation receiver regulator for gun 21 back together and, hopefully, water tight. The

telescopes are back on the gun and he's doing the final detailing. As always, the ship will look her best when we close for the season.



Gary Sheedy's restored laundry is a place of beauty.

Gary Sheedy has taken a hiatus for the steering gear compartment to help the guys on the seawall railing. He's essentially become the team leader in Doug's absence. His restored Laundry was the hit of the DESA Convention. **Barry Witte** has had his students working on a variety of projects, too. They continue to make progress replicating the smoke generator in the steering gear compartment. Midshipman

Patrick Madden has been tending to the B3 and B4 railing. They have been fabricating missing handrails in the aft motor room (B-4). Barry has been in close communication with **Ed Zajkowski** on his entire project. It seems that whatever obscure part Barry is working on, Ed is prepared to scan an actual blueprint of the part. Ed challenges us to be as accurate as possible. RPI students, **Vince Montouri** and **Nick Ruzicka**, have been continuing work on the smoke generating system. Construction of additional components will be done at the shop at Colonie High School.



Angelo Bracco serves up jambalaya to Boats Haggart during Smitty's absence.

With RPI back in session, Barry is using the Midshipmen to sort through and organize the spare parts in B-4. Some of the old tool boxes haven't been opened since SLATER came up from Manhattan. **Smitty was away for three weeks, visiting Ireland, and the loss of our cook really put a damper on morale.** Several of the crew stepped up to the "plate" to fill in. **Angelo Bracco** came up with his famous jambalaya for one meal. **Cathy Wheat** brought "meals on wheels" on another Saturday. And, the two of them



Larry Sowinski played a critical role in saving USS SLATER by giving the ship her first home in America.

worked with **Barry Witte** to pinch hit with pasta and sauce on several occasions. By the time Smitty returned, our cupboard was pretty bare, so it's about time to restock.

This month we learned of the death of Larry Sowinski, the director of the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum until 1997. He played a pivotal role in saving the INTREPID. When arrangements were being made to bring USS SLATER back from Greece, it was Larry who offered to give her a home at the INTREPID.

We had no other good options at the time. Larry felt strongly that, as all the ships at the park were post-war or heavily modified, the addition of a ship in her original WWII configuration would be an important addition to the park.

Larry died on Monday, August 21, 2017, at the age of 77, at Connecticut Hospice in Branford, Connecticut. Born on June 20, 1941, in Albertson, New York, Larry served in the US Navy from 1959 - 1963. His professional profile presented skills and expertise that included museum director, planning strategist, exhibit developer and designer, Naval historian, published Naval author, master scratch-built ship modeler, art director, and illustrator. Following Larry's career at Intrepid, that included Executive Director, Director of Exhibits, and Trustee and Vice President, he went on to become the Executive Director of the Palm Springs Air Museum, in Palm Springs, California and then Director of the Knights of Columbus Museum in New Haven, Connecticut.

Larry was a remarkable man. His love of history, his love of the lines and grace of US naval ships, and the men who commanded and served aboard them was extraordinary. Larry, along with Ed Zajkowski and Tom Walkiowiak, were the first historians to delve deeply into the study of WWII Navy camouflage. Thus, it is a fitting tribute to Larry that USS SLATER now wears her authentic measure 32 3/d camouflage. We feel that we have achieved and gone beyond Larry's original vision for USS SLATER. Let her serve as a tribute to Larry Sowinski's legacy.



Whaleboat rides at the DESA Convention.

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!



The DESA Convention made for a real intergenerational experience for many families.