



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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February. The short month of February. The month ends tomorrow, and I need to write something. Creative inspiration is failing me. Maybe it's time to pick up on **Tim Benner's** accusation. Go copy and paste the February 2011 SIGNALS, change the names and compartment number, and call it "February 2018."



Tommy Moore made repairs to the insulation in the berthing compartment.

We're scheduled to bring **Kevin Sage** in to start painting out berthing space C-202-L on **March 5**. **Ron Prest** is in today, doing the last chipping before the painting starts. The last of the steelwork is still going on, as **Andy Sheffer** welds up the deck in the aft cross passageway.

It's this time of year that I start to fret about how I am going to get the ship cleaned up for opening day, but as I look around, I realize I don't need to worry. Every one of the thirty or so volunteers who've been working aboard all winter are also very aware that we have a deadline, and are working towards that completion date. Take for instance, our cleanup dynamo, **Cathy Wheat**. She's systematically been working through the forward berthing spaces and officers' country, making up bunks, folding



Cathy Wheat and her vacuum cleaner are playing a critical role in getting the ship ready for the public.

blankets, and setting up displays. If you show up on a Saturday, and don't immediately engage yourself in some task, it won't take long for Cathy to find you and put you to work with a vacuum cleaner.



Under Barry Witte's direction, there has been a lot of rewiring in CIC.

Barry Witte gets it. He's had a large contingent of NPTU Sailors and RPI Midshipmen working all winter. They wrapped up his pipe work in the aft berthing space, C-202-L, where he was removing post-war modifications to the fresh water system. He is now pushing them to complete the rewiring of the audio systems in CIC, so that will be ready for opening day. He also completed his exterior wiring on the trailer, so the carpenters can finish their

work. In addition, he also pushed for stowing the circulators the first day it got to fifty degrees.

Earl Herchenroder gets it. Every day that the weather is decent, he's been out on the observation deck with Tim Benner, Super Dave, and anyone else who is available, finishing up the trim work around the doors, windows, and eaves, so the trailer will be ready for painting.



The crew took advantage of the few warm days to continue work on the trailer rehab.



Doug Tanner and his shipfitters repaired all the wasted and damaged metal in the aft berthing compartment.



Boats Haggart straightened out the deck gear locker for the tenth time, while he waits for spring.

Doug Tanner gets it. A bad cold and other commitments have kept him off of the ship, but he's got **Andy, Danny, and Chuck** wrapping up the welding in the berthing space and aft cross passageway, so those areas can be painted. He calls or emails about three times a week, to see how things are going. I think he misses us.

Boats Haggart gets it. He's been ready to uncover the guns, roll up the cocoa mats, and put the whaleboat back in the water ever since the first of the year. To slow him down, I had to buy him another box of floater net floats, to keep him occupied.

Rosehn and Shanna get it. Rosehn keeps reminding me not to start any new projects, as we count down to opening day. Shanna is in the process of interviewing and hiring interns for the 2018 season, and preparing for her tour guide refresher-training day on March 24th.

They've been busily sending out post card reminders to area schools, booking tours and overnight encampments, lining up store orders, and contracting marketing efforts.

I'm thinking the only one who doesn't get it, and will never get it, is Sheedy. Some people say that Gary marches to the beat of a different drummer. Judging from the music that's been blasting out of aft steering all winter, that drummer toured with ABBA in the late seventies.



Gary Sheedy and the new commode for aft officers' country.

Fortunately for Shanna, whose office is in the adjacent supply office, she is also a fan. Gary is working closely with Shanna on the best ways to display the artifacts back in special collections, but working at Gary's pace, it's difficult to say when these concepts will come to fruition.



Perfection can't be rushed. Gary Sheedy restores the door to the officer's head.

We give Gary his time and space for two reasons. Having seen the reefer deck, we know what the ultimate result will be. And, he's not on the tour route, so he can take as long as he wants. Always the perfectionist, Gary lives in a timeless place, where perfection can't be rushed and things take as long as they take. He puts in more hours on the ship than anybody, reporting aboard almost every day of the week.

Each day he comes in with a specific task in mind that he wants to accomplish, be it to mount a polished door knob, sand a cabinet, or insulate the bulkhead in after officers' country. Gary enlisted in the Navy in 1967. He was sent to Great Lakes Electrician School, and attained the rank of Electrician 2nd Class. He was then assigned to an Inactive Ship Maintenance Facility at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for two years. His duties included electrical work relating to ship dehumidification. Late in 1969, Gary was sent to Danang, Viet Nam for a 4-month tour of duty. In May 1970, he was ordered to report to USS SATYR (ARL-23), an LST converted to a landing craft repair ship. For 7 months, Gary performed repair work on Patrol River Boats along the Mekong River.



Gary Sheedy and Barry Witte tidied up a lot of the cable runs prior to repainting.



Ed Zajkowski drove a hard bargain before he agreed to donate a medicine cabinet.



Gary Sheedy and Barry Witte tidied up a lot of the cable runs prior to repainting.

He was one of the first volunteers to report aboard SLATER when she arrived in Albany, in October of 1997. He was talked into it, or conned into it, by his friend Barry Witte. He is always available to repair power tools, overhaul needle scalers, or to lift, carry, and stow whatever needed to be done. He brings to the project a great sense of humor and an easygoing personality, and is one of the most popular members of the crew.

As part of the restoration of after officers' country, Gary wanted a Navy-style medicine cabinet for the head. We put out some feelers as to what ship might have one to donate to us and, of course, the world's ultimate hoarder of ship parts, **Ed Zajkowski**, had one in his basement. Ed was willing to donate the medicine cabinet to Gary, providing certain conditions were met. Ed drew up a contract that included, among other things, certain items to be traded for the cabinet, and lifetime use of the after officers' stateroom whenever he came to Albany. Fortunately, we had Rosehn on hand to notarize the agreement.

It might be a good time to acknowledge Ed's other work for us. In addition to having a seemingly endless supply of spare parts, Ed has three other things that have been invaluable to us. They include an incredible archive on original shipboard documentation, an insatiable curiosity as to what the correct WWII configuration of the ship was, and the time to do the research. We have been leaning on him for years in our efforts to "Get It Right," and Ed always seems to come up with the answers. When Ed can't find it, he reaches out to his friend, Chris Wright, the editor of "Warship International" magazine. Chris is a regular researcher at the National Archives, and has provided us with invaluable documentation over the years. When we need a photo of a specific DE that we can't find on the web, Chris can usually ferret it out of the archives for us. He and Ed make a terrific research team.

Even though we are closed to the public, our education programs don't stop. The Education department has been busy with four presentations this month. **Art Dott** went to the Normanside Country Club in Delmar for a presentation to the Second Milers Club, **Alan Fox** came down with a nasty cold, so we called in back-up in the person of **Charles Starks**. Charles presented in Saratoga on the 15th and 23rd, as well as in Latham on the 28th.



Paul Guarnieri took advantage of the winter to do some cleaning out in the forward motor room.

Shanna spent the first day of the month in Schenectady, at the Summer Reading Workshop and Showcase, hosted by the Mohawk Valley and Upper Hudson Library Systems. Here, she presented information about the educational programs USS SLATER has to offer to representatives of 56 libraries. The first item she talked about was our Museum Pass, in which many libraries participate. Patrons of each library have the chance to

check out the museum pass, which earns you free admission to SLATER for two adults and two children. She also spoke about the four presentations we can bring to a library, classroom, or hall. They include the Battle of the Atlantic, Heroes All Around Us, Saving Slater, and the newest addition, Dazzle Camouflage, a lesson meant for children.

Shanna wrapped up this presentation by informing the librarians that she can set up displays at their libraries. The displays include Naval uniforms, WWII ship's equipment, and historic photographs. If they don't have any space for this type of display, she also has a gallery display of framed paintings, maps, and photographs to be hung on walls. These displays work perfectly to accompany a presentation, or to call attention to the museum pass.

An artifact display will be up at Rensselaer Public Library for the month of March, and Stan Levandowski will give a presentation to an Amateur Radio Association in Cortland on the 4th. That STEM tour you have heard so much about is still underway. A rough draft is completed, and sent out to the team for review. Shanna is also advertising, with plans to hire new interns for this season. We've had two interviews so far, and more to come! Our guide refresher lunch is scheduled for March 24th at 1130.



Replica floater nets are ready for spring.

In Collections, Shanna's making progress slowly but surely. She's been through all the artifacts, sorted what needs to be displayed from what does not, and is now ready to start setting up some displays. Don't worry. We'll give you some photos when the space is ready.

Inside the Ship's Store, inventory has been completed. So now is the time to start reordering our merchandise, to make sure we are ready to go in a month for our season opener 2018!

Rosehn received another quarterly payment from AmazonSmile this month. It's not a lot, but it has been slowly increasing since we signed up. And, every bit helps keep SLATER afloat. If you shop on



Sailors from Ballston Spa have been working on the sound effect equipment that will go into CIC.

Amazon and don't know about AmazonSmile, here's how it works. AmazonSmile is operated by Amazon, with the same products, prices, and shopping features as Amazon.com. The difference is that when you shop on AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate a small portion of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice. Get started by clicking on their and support us every time you shop.

If you shop online, but not through Amazon, consider GoodShop. This site lets you shop thousands of stores online and designate a portion of your purchase to your choice of its affiliated charities and schools. There are plenty of discounts, too. Go to www.goodsearch.com to get started. Remember, we're listed as a Destroyer Escort Historical Museum.



The ice broke up a month early, so we pulled the circulators aboard.

Again, we can't thank you enough for your support of our Winter Fund Drive. Your donations continue to come in on a daily basis, enabling us to maintain the cash flow necessary to get through the winter months. We could never have accomplished the great things we have without your support.

There will be one workweek this spring, organized by the USS HUSE Reunion Association. The

dates for the event will be Sunday 6 May thorough Friday 11 May. If you are interested in bearing a hand with SLATER's maintenance for all or part of the week, we welcome you to join us. The coordinator for the event is George Amandola, and you can contact him at Gamand@aol.com or call him at 610-909-1535. For those who like to plan way in advance, the Fall Work Week is scheduled for September 30-October 5.

It seems not a month goes by without losing another volunteer. This month we got word from Dave Perlstein that Roland Robbins, a regular with the USS HUSE work group, passed away from complications resulting from heart surgery. Roland was a former radioman with a top-secret clearance. He served on the Admiral's Staff of CRUDESANT in Newport, before being assigned sea duty aboard the HUSE. He served aboard her from 1957-1959. Then he completed a degree in education, and taught for several years before hiring on with NCR corporation as a computer analyst. Roland was a staple at the HUSE workweeks, taking care of the paint locker with Bill Meehan. Our condolences are extended to Roland's family.

So back to where I started. Another winter is almost over, and we are on final countdown to opening day. We look around at this point in the years, and wonder how all the things that need to get done will get done. Couple that with continually threatening weather, it still makes me nervous about opening day. But, when you watch this crew in action, you know there's nothing to worry about. They've been doing it for twenty years, and there's no reason to think that this opening day will be any different. SLATER will shine. **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!**



Roland Robbins, center, with his USS HUSE shipmates.