

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
By Timothy C. Rizzuto, Ship's Superintendent

Destroyer Escort Historical Museum

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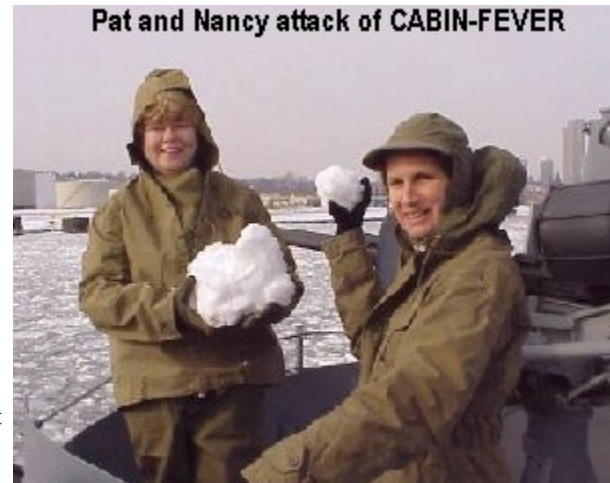
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Blame everything on February. The push is on to get ready for opening day six weeks away. The winter is flying by. I, for one, could use another month of this weather before we open to the public, so that we can get more restoration done inside. And you know what? I don't think there is one person in the crew who would agree with me. Everyone else says the quicker this is over with the better.

If you recall last month's passage about "Upstate New Yorkers" February is the month things really start going down hill and people start losing their sense of humor. You'd like to think that spring is just a month away. At least that's what the calendar says. But you know it isn't true. Spring starts when you can paint outside, and that's two months away. All the Albanians who didn't go to Florida are starting to get a little edgy.

The river has been frozen solid for the past month. We've spent a lot of time watching the tugs move the oil barges against the ice, and try to keep the channel open. So far the old SLATER'S hull seems to be taking it okay. The ice forced the ship out about two feet from the pier. That coupled with the seven-foot tide put a lot of strain on the mooring lines. That's when the stretchy nylon really earns its keep. We always picked the coldest day to adjust the lines and wires. We check the draft marks and the clinometer every day. Nothing changes. Conditions normal. That's no problem, but the Portajohn (affectionately referred to by the crew as "The Blue Room") has also been frozen solid for a month. It gave new meaning to the phrase, "Don't look down". (Did I use that joke before?) Anyway, they finally put in some chemical to thaw it out enough to pump it. That was a great day for all concerned.

If you're still reading this after that last observation, I'll bring you up to date on restoration progress. **Radio is progressing beautifully.** Jerry Jones, Don Bulger, Bob Calendar and Larry Williams have been rewiring and detailing the space. Jerry has everyone in awe of his detail work on the brass antenna switches and patch panels. He's now working on the desks, and says one day the whole place will be perfect. A little point of contention arose when we located a photo that detailed the aft bulkhead of SLATER'S radioroom. The guys had just mounted all the equipment in place on a Wednesday, as per my instructions. I got the picture on a Thursday, and on Saturday, had the Saturday electricians tear out everything that the Wednesday electricians had installed and remount it according to the photograph. When the Wednesday electricians came back and wanted to know what the hell was going on, I took the heat like I always do. I said, "Barry didn't like it." You have to be a SLATER electrician to get that one. Finally, Jerry has the operator's desks on deck and has started restoring them. Jerry does beautiful work, but is



(Winter Gear fashions courtesy of US Navy 1944 issue and previously worn by Slater Engineering Officer, Lt Clifton W. Woltz)



Radio Central - February Restoration Progress



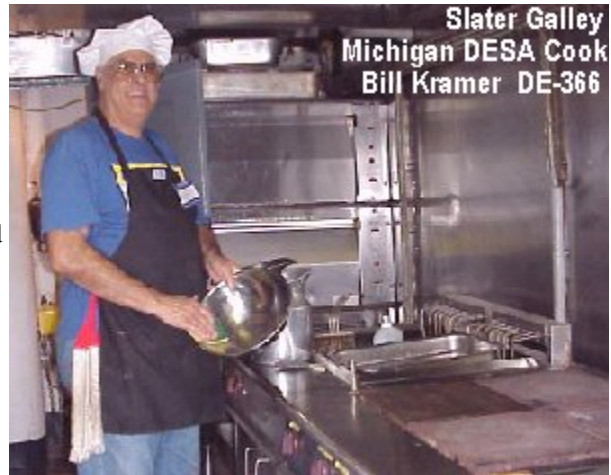
never there when Pat Perrella takes pictures of his work. Somehow, Larry William's is always in the picture blocking the view of Jerry's latest masterpiece. All I can say is, Hey, I just write a newsletter. Don't come to me for justice.

Barry and Mike have continued their goal of rewiring the whole ship with armored cable. Their latest project is a five pair two hundred feet to the aft crew's quarters for the ship's entertainment system.

Gary's a little edgy. He got so edgy he took his wife on a cruise. No, we're not talking about crossing the Hudson on the SLATER. He took her on a real cruise ship to the Caribbean. He sent us a postcard that said in part, "This ship is great. Everything is working but me. I thought I heard the sound of needleguns coming from topside, but it turned out to be the guy at the crap table

shaking the dice." He sent us a picture taken on deck and asked us to identify what piece of equipment the cruise ship had that was the same on the SLATER. If you looked real hard, you could see the paint scraper on the boat davit. All good things must end, and he had to come back to the SLATER. He was so frustrated that he ripped the whole galley apart and threw three ovens out on deck in a heap.

Actually, It's part of our ongoing preparations to welcome the Michigan Chapter on April 30. I made a ton of promises to the effect that SLATER would be the equivalent of a luxury hotel by the time they arrived. Now the crew is busting their butts to try and keep my promises. Gary is working on getting all the original grills and the two original ovens fully functional with parts from the extra ovens that the Greeks added. In their place we will install a refrigerator. We also moved the potato peeler, and cleared a lot of extraneous metalwork from the counter tops. We are installing new lights and receptacles. Doug Tanner is working on getting fresh hot and cold water up to the galley sink and working on the drain. When finished, the galley will be both more functional and more original. We plan to install a second hot water heater and plumb up another shower stall to address the biggest concern of the Michigan crew.



The welding and cutting crew, Clark Farnsworth, Tim Benner, and Russ Ferrer have been busy making structural repairs to the areas we're restoring. Russ has been tending to the heating system and working on door hardware. I recently received a note from Russ's wife that expresses how concerned SLATER wives are about the ship. The note read:

"Dear Tim
Hi! Please add to Russ' schedule the following:
Removing + cleaning drip trays from kitchen stove-
Thanks, Delores"

I hadn't even realized that Delores had been aboard the ship recently, but I immediately checked the galley and realized she was right. The drip trays did need cleaning, and I was grateful that she volunteered Russ for the job. I just wonder why she referred to the galley as the "Kitchen".

Chris Fedden is finishing up with officer's country and then heading up to the pilothouse. Dick Smith finished CIC and the passageway, and is heading aft into the maindeck passageway. Raf is in the aft passageway heading forward. I'm outside the wardroom heading aft towards Raf. Pat Cancilla is chipping on the 02 level heading to the maindeck. Bob Dawson is in officer's country heading to CIC (He's a radarman.) Storekeeper Dick Walker is in the tool room heading nowhere. And BMC George Irwin says he's heading to lunch. Bob Callendar is in the Radio Room and he's headed for Florida. Andy and Gordon are in officer's country sanding the bulkheads and furniture. Roy Gunther was last seen in the Captain's head trying to install a commode. Chris, Erik and Claire go in after the chippers and scrape, clean, vacuum and wipe down. Ray Lammers moves quietly around, pulling electrical box covers, soaking them in paint remover, spraying them gray, polishing their fasteners, and reinstalling them. And Tom Moore is working behind

everybody repairing the insulation. Amid the din and chaos Nancy is walking around holding her hands over her ears, counting the money from the dogtag sales, trying to make phone calls and book tours.



Things are tracking okay so that we should begin masking and spray painting out the compartments before the end of the month. Our goal is to make it to the amidships passageway before April first, and hopefully finish the aft cross passageway.

Dick Walker took his truck over to the port warehouse the other day and came back with some more gear for the CIC restoration and a three-seat trough for the aft head. That will be our next big welding and fitting project, the installation of the original sinks and trough. Tom and Hack, if you're reading this, we need you back! This will be the hit of the tour! Nobody these days would believe it. And we won't even discuss payday in the "old navy".

Dick and "first-mate" Maralyn have also been out in the community promoting SLATER along with some others in our volunteer crew. A Stage Door Canteen was recently sponsored by

Cindy Pollard, proprietor of Altamont's "Home-Front Café". This event was held at the Altamont Village Hall as a Fund-Raiser for the WW II Memorial. Don Kruse and Chief Dave Floyd joined the Walkers at the SLATER Display and raised over \$100.00 in souvenir sales for us. In the spirit of the occasion, the Walker's donated an equal amount towards the Memorial.

Erik Collin was down in the chief's quarters reading the "Damage Control Book". He noted that the section on the ship's fresh water system didn't mention anything about 1-gallon plastic jugs, the spring in Troy, or Chuck Teator continuing to haul water for our coffee. He also quoted the intro to the electrical section that read, "A ship without electrical power is essentially useless as a fighting unit." Barry made us all recite that three times.

Slater volunteers continue to remain on the "cutting" edge wherever they may be. Down in Brownsville, TX, Don Shattuck is checking his E-mail and SLATER's Website. Then he is out on the road visiting scrap yards and old ship building sites looking for needed 1943 vintage parts. While that was a great way to get out of this snow, he task is proving to be a difficult one as these parts are becoming a rarity. Jerry Jones, on the other hand, is scrounging on E-BAY and no wonder he misses the 0900 roll call to Quarters; he's on at 0200 bidding for a 1942 Navy Radio Service Manual! It seems there was only one other serious bidder and at some stage of the transaction Jerry thought to inquire who this person could be. It seems Rich Pikelney from USS PAMPANITO (SS-383), a "sister" Historic Naval Ship (Balao-Class Submarine) was at the other end of that bidding in San Francisco, CA. And now they are "teaming up" to hit the Reserve Fleet in Susuin Bay. Well Jerry isn't getting a Liberty until Radio Central is finished so E-BAY will have to do.



Dave Meyersburg, Collections Manager has completed the cataloguing of all the books aboard SLATER and presented us with a complete print-out. Now that our Ships' Library is formally organized we can actually locate various manuals and Technical Guides to accompany the restoration work. Several which have already helped are Radio Technical Guides, The Optical Rangefinder Manual, and Cliff Woltz's "Submarine Chaser Manual" used during his training at Morehead City, NC and Miami, FL in 1943. Cliff had also given us his Operational Handbooks which Supplement the Maintenance Manuals for the GMC Diesel Engines which he used as Engineering Officer aboard SLATER and they are valuable reference items.

Weather permitting we want to be able to open the ship April First at the Snow Dock. The present plan will be to put the camels in the week of March 20th, and move the ship back to Albany on Tuesday March 28th, to be ready to open at the Snow Dock on Saturday April 1st. Of course, this schedule depends a lot on the weather, but that's the plan. We'll be looking for all hands that last week of March to give a few extra hours to cleaning the ship up, the usual last minute panic painting, and getting ready for the public.

I should report on the status of the four grant applications we have pending. We have completed the specifications for the hull painting above the waterline and are having our spec reviewed by the state and will put it out for bid to try and award the contract at the end of March and do the work in April to June. We have three other grants we haven't received a decision on. A decision on grants for the restoration of the aft crews quarters, restoration of the motor whaleboat and the money to construct the ice deflection system at the Snow Dock is still pending. Finally, we have completed the paperwork for the \$100,000. New York State Senate Member Item to support the restoration program during the coming fiscal year. Finally, Frank Lasch is pursuing a similar member item from the New York State Assembly. Feel a little less shaky? I know I do.

NOTES from Nancy: Guides and dock volunteers - it's time to shake yourselves out of those winter doldrums (this probably doesn't apply to those folks wintering in Florida) and start thinking about SLATER'S opening day. This season will be our busiest - we already have a dozen school groups scheduled and our reunion calendar is amazing. We are working with Gina Mintzer and the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau and could have over 40 ship reunions booked by the end of October 2000. This doesn't include the DESA Convention Group scheduled for the second week in September.

This year we will have monthly meetings for guides and visitor services volunteers. At the first meeting in March we will talk about scheduling. (The date of this meeting has been scheduled for Saturday, March 18th at 1300 or 1 PM for you "landlubbers") After that I hope the meetings will actually be interesting and informative. If you have any questions or comments before we meet in March, give me a call. I do have one request - bring me more volunteers! Ask your neighbors, pester your friends, annoy your relatives, irritate your acquaintances - just get them down to the ship. Seriously, if you know someone who would be a great SLATER VOLUNTEER try to get them involved.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped out at Crossgates Mall with some special thanks going to Annette & Les Beauchaine for all their dedication and hard work. Russ Ferrer also has made our lives a lot easier as he rigged a set of wheels for the dog tag machine. It has completely altered my view of that two-ton machine. I no longer call it ugly names as I move it around!

As we move into March with most of the winter behind us we are looking forward to having the newly restored areas added to our tours. Anyone who visited last season will be amazed at the progress and transformation and we are hopeful the progress will add SLATER to everyone's "MUST SEE" list for the Albany Capital District.

