

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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The big event of the month was a visit by the New York City fireboat **JOHN J. HARVEY**. **HARVEY** is a museum ship tied up on the Chelsea Piers and operated as a private yacht. She was built in 1931 and surplused several years ago. She was purchased to be a stationary museum ship, much like us. Along came engineer **Tim Ivory** who looked at her five Fairbanks, and said, "I could get this baby running." And he did. The engineering plant is a Diesel electric, twin screw, and a wonderful example of 1930's technology. No bridge control. You still answer bells. All the motors and generators have open windings and brushes, and the switchboard is a live front panel with the big



NYC Fireboat, JOHN J. HARVEY



Frankenstein switches. I was ready to change from deck to engine and put in for a transfer. Besides, they allow beer aboard. They lay outboard of us two nights, put on a barbecue for our volunteers, and gave us our best Sunday of the summer. The visit was well covered by the media, so we had great attendance. A lot of our gang got to ride her to Troy.

They were an inspiration to us because they move! Apparently, we were an inspiration to them because of our topside paintwork and shipshape appearance above and below decks. I don't mean to be a critic, but they reminded us of the way we looked three years ago. They really need a good deck force. I wanted to take a needle scaler over there myself and go to work. It wouldn't take much. Their two engineers, **Tim** and **Jessica**, spent all Monday volunteering on **SLATER**. With our volunteers, **Bob Lawrence** and his son **Dave**, they pulled all the covers on the two mains in B-3 and did an assessment of their condition. It wasn't too encouraging. While neither engine is frozen, three liners on each engine showed serious corrosion, White crustys growing out of the airports. Tim felt that those six cylinders would have to be pulled before we could try rotating the engines with air. They got them all buttoned up again for us. It was good information as to what we face in the future.

Which bring up our greatest engineering need. We really need a really sharp, retired Diesel mechanic who can volunteer about three days a week, and coordinate the efforts of all the individuals who come down a couple days a month. That includes the reservists and the guys like **Chuck Longshore** who comes in from Vermont, and the other out-of-staters who come in to work. What happens now is that if the best Diesel mechanic in the world came aboard today and none of our engineers were available to give him an assignment, I'd probably just try to get him to help paint the decks. **Gus, Bill, Larry, Tom** and the rest all work at jobs that pay real money, so as good as they are, the time they can spend aboard is limited. The crew of the **HARVEY** brought us something else too that's very important; the knowledge and experience of going through a yard overhaul in New York. They recently went through a dry-docking and willingly shared their knowledge with us and are more than willing to help us when the time comes for us to undergo the process. Hopefully, that won't be too far down the road.

Which brings us to grants. Presently we have one grant application submitted and pending. That's a request to the *Department of the Interior* for 400K to go towards dry-docking the vessel. This was the [Save America's Treasures](#)

Program. We are preparing a second 800K application with the *NYS Department of Transportation* for the bulk of the money. Getting both these grants should allow us to do a really thorough overhaul and replace any shell plating that is badly deteriorated. The Transportation money is out of the TEA-21 Non Highway Transportation Enhancement Act, and that application is due in November. This will be the second time we have applied for funding under that program. So, the earliest we would have any definite word would be the spring of 2002. We are also making our third application for the mooring dolphins to replace the sinking camels. **Nancy Buxton** has been working hard to make an August 31st deadline on that grant. We have scaled down the proposal and eliminated the ice deflection portion of the package, hoping to at least get funding to replace the camels with solid pilings and fenders. Again, spring of 2002 is probably the earliest we will hear, so if the powers that be decide we are worthy, construction probably couldn't begin until the fall of 2002. Imagine, a perfect world where all the grants came through, and the ship went away to the shipyard while the piles were driven in Albany. I should be such an optimist.

Not being an optimist, we organized our first damage control class on Saturday Morning, August 11th. Doug Tanner and Barry Witte lectured the volunteers on flood control, techniques to slow flooding, establishment of watertight boundaries and how to react to flooding. We then hooked up one of the 440-volt submersibles and showed everyone how to use it. **Doug, Tim Benner and Chuck Teal** just fabricated new racks for the pumps. In addition, the *Albany Navy Reservists* have got both our P-250 gasoline pumps running, and are doing bi-monthly checks on them. The best news is that both **Bob Cross**, Commissioner of the Albany Water Department, and the folks at the Albany Fire Department indicated a willingness to help us if we ever get in trouble. **Bob Cross** even sent us a list of the pumps he had available with the words, *"Don't worry, you won't have to go it alone."* Because as everyone knows, if anything ever does go wrong, it will be on the coldest, windiest February morning at two a.m. We want to be ready. We also discussed fire prevention, and if you didn't get the word, the decision was made to close all the watertight and joiner doors at night, and secure the ventilation at night to contain any fire that might ever break out. So if you ever have occasion to lock the ship up, keep that in mind.



The response to the DESA portion of the endowment fund drive has been very encouraging. Stacks of little envelopes have been coming back to **SLATER** every day and we now have well over \$200,000. in the endowment account. This has kept **Debbie, Sam Saylor, Maralyn Walker, Arlene Dawson and Beth Spain** extremely busy logging the contributions, making deposits and handling the thank you letters. They all agree that it's a lot of work, but a successful endowment is the most wonderful problem that a museum could have. The worst part for me is that **Beth** hasn't had any time to chip paint. The best part is that **Marty Davis** has had over 200 yellow forms returned to him. This was for his request to recruit a Task Force to help us take the drive to the next step. They will be contacting their shipmates by phone so that we can reach all the DE vets who are non DESA members too. If you want to help out by contacting your shipmates, please let us know. We still have a long way to go. To all of you who have put your continued faith in us, we thank you. When **Ray Lammers** made a sizable contribution to the endowment, I thanked him with a big hug. I was advised that hugs from me might be a real detriment to our fund raising efforts.

Well, brace yourselves. We're going to give the **SLATER** away again; to ourselves. Many of you remember the initial controversy at the creation of the Foundation, **DEHF**. At the time **DESA** was a last man organization, but we didn't want the **SLATER** to be a last man ship. I mean, someone has to be there to swab the decks when the last man goes ashore. So out of **DESA** was created the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum, in which anyone who had an interest in **SLATER** could be a member, including, thankfully, civilians like me. Well after three years of fund raising, **Frank Lasch** found that the big boys with money keep kicking sand in his face with the words, *"We only give to education groups."* Plus, and this is a small point for a group of pirates like us, if the museum is located in New York State it must be chartered by the *New York State Department of Education*. So after nine years, we're coming out of the closet. After an incredible one-year legal application with lots of multipart questionnaires, we have had our application approved by the *New York State Board of Regents* and received a Charter from the *State Department of Education*. We will become the Destroyer Escort Historical Museum. Only a lawyer could have done it. I've never seen a guy happier to get an envelope than Frank was when the Charter came in; complete with gold embossed seal. I thought it was his tax refund. Frank is not the kind of guy to go through a lot of legal gyrations without a very good reason, so this should have some very beneficial rewards for our old **SLATER**.

So, slowly, over time, because that's the way we do everything, the assets of **DEHF**, including the **SLATER**, will be moved to the new corporation, the **DEHM**. If the State of Florida approves, this transfer will happen on December 31, 2001. We're still the same gang of lovable crazies with the same ship, the same mission, and the same old worn out paintbrushes. Except, now in the eyes of New York State, we are legitimate, and hopefully, in the eyes of the big money foundations, a good investment in education.

That brings us to another great step forward. One of our part-time tour guides, **Kira Zaikowski**, is working on a master's degree in history. We proposed to her advisor, Dr. Ivan Steen, that she do her internship aboard the **SLATER**. We drafted a proposal that included equal parts of practical experience. She'll work on artifacts with Pat Perrella, development and fund raising with **Deb Moore**, and education and gift shop with **Nancy Buxton**. The proposal was enthusiastically accepted, which will hopefully lead to a closer relationship with SUNY and additional interns in the future.



Tom Moore repainting the boottop



Tin Can Sailors to the Rescue!
Rich Houston, John Mohr,
and Bill Humienny deliver spare
Hedge-Hog to SLATER

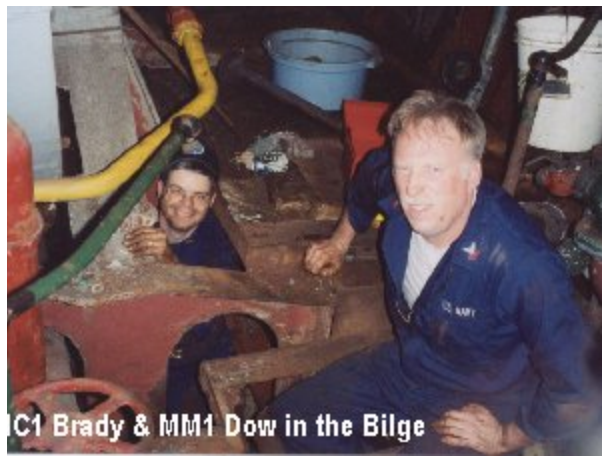
So what has the crew been doing? On deck, **Tommy Moore** rigged the johnboat with an outrigger and spent the month repainting the boottop. The day the **HARVEY** cleared the side, **Tom** was touching up the paint. And it's really pretty straight! **Smitty, Earl Gillette, Bill Hoeth, Erik Collin, and Mark Spain** have been continuing their work scaling and painting decks. The main deck aft of the breakwater is all done, and they're up on the focs'le. **Dave Floyd** has been restoring the hedgehog projector and engineer **Chuck Longshore** stenciled all the hedgehog projectiles. Speaking of hedgehogs, we had a Sunday morning visit by three Tin Can Sailors from **USS EDSON DD-946** who brought us a spare hedgehog. **Bill Humienny, John Mohr and Rich Houston** discovered it while they were moving the workshop on **INTREPID CV-11**. Bill and John are also former **SLATER** volunteers from the NYC 1993-97 years. They figured they better bring it up in case we needed a spare. One never knows what type of engagements a "sister tin-can" might encounter upstream on the Hudson River, these days **THANKS, guys!** It should also be noted that **Dave Floyd** received an award this month for his years of dedicated service to the NY Naval Militia. New volunteer **Andy Desorbo** has begun repainting the forward three-inch gun. **Rich Pavlovic** continues his work on the restoration of gun three. **Bill Coyle** is working to replace all the material condition tags throughout the ship. He's researching his X, Y's and Z's in the damage control book. He says it's those circle W's that really confuse him.



Chief Dave Floyd with award from NY Naval Militia

Don Shattuck, Bob Callender, and Larry Williams finished the fans in C-203L and are rewiring and installing new lights in the muffler room. They follow **Gary Sheedy and Barry** who ran a new power line up from the main switchboard because the power circuit for the heating boiler and the hot water heater was over loaded. The heating system is about ready to go. All **Russ Ferrer** had to do is a final pressure test. In the meantime, **Russ** had been rebuilding the mast-mounted bullhorn that enabled the IMC to project over the water to other ships. He restored the eight speakers, which were a mass of rust and replaced the entire housing, which had holes from years in storage in the pilothouse of the old **USS GAGE APA-168**. That should get installed in Rensselaer when we are pierside. Back aft **Ed Whitbeck and Pat Cancilla** are continuing their work chipping away C-203L. We give them about two more months, and with the expected help of the Michigan gang, we'll get them out of there.

Michigan DESA Members Dave Marsh and Dick Walker in Fire Control Radar Room



We had a lot of out of town help this month. **Dick Walker** and **Dave Marsh** came in from Michigan to repaint the fire control radar room. **Earl Johnson**, **Ray Windle**, and **Sam Saylor** came in from the Long Beach and Plano. They ran a water fill line for the emergency Diesel and replumbed two showers with drain plugs. Down in the bilges, **Gus Negus** has the emergency Diesel so shined up that people are accusing him of having bought a new engine and dropped it in place. Forward, **Larry Lachance** and **Tom Cintula** have two of the three air flasks in B-3 hydro tested with the help of the *Albany Reservists*. My image of the month was going into B-4 one Sunday and finding reservists **MM1 Ed Dow** and **IC1 Matt Brady** up to their necks in the bilge's as they worked on the fire and flushing pump in B-4. **Larry** has this dream of taking **SLATER** back to Tampa for the sixtieth anniversary of her launching. We hate to discourage him, but that's not too far down the road.



B4 Emergency Diesel



B4 Emergency Diesel Dials



WHALEBOAT "Hanging Over the Falls"

The whaleboat is almost done. The scheduled date for launching is now the Saturday before Labor Day. **Rocky** wants to lower her to the water and let her hang on the falls for a couple of days to let her swell up. **Roy** had been conferring with **Rick Scarano**, and **Rick** came down to look the boat over. We expect to have Clark tow her down to Scarano's the Tuesday after Labor Day for the installation of the engine. To that end, **Doug Tanner** is fabricating new stainless steel fuel tanks for the boat. We expect her to motor up here in September.

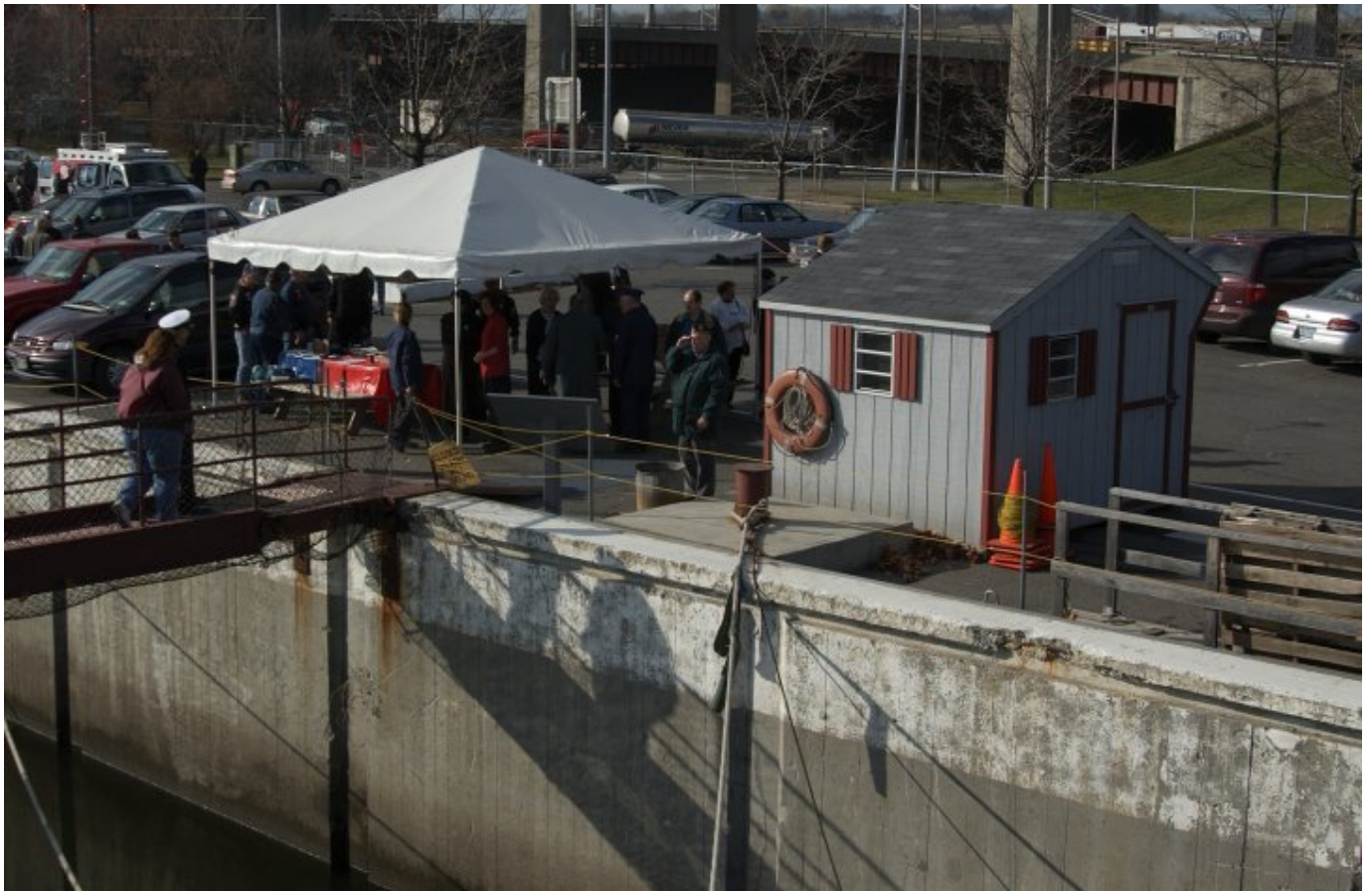
Which reminds me, I better work on getting her registered. Wonder what we'll use for a "Bill of Sale". Guess I'll just give them the Greek transfer document for the **SLATER** with a picture of the **SLATER** as she arrived in New York with the whaleboat circled. **Bob Dawson** is working on the DRT in CIC. The rest of the shipfitters, **Clark**, **George Erwin**, and **Red Hume** have been repairing wasted watertight fittings around the ship. And in the last of the unrecognized tour guides department, we have former WAVE air controller **Maybelle "Mike" Milian** who never got mentioned for her dedication. She never complained, but her shipmates sure did!

Don Bulger giving Tim Rizzuto heart failure.....



Finally, **Jerry Jones**, **Tom Moore** and **Don Bulger** got the big longwire antenna run from the truck to the stub mast aft. **Don** gave me the biggest scare of the month while I was walking up the portside main deck. I looked up at the superstructure to see **Don Bulger** standing on the outriggers that support the vertical longwire antennas. He was about twenty-five feet above the main deck trusting a sixty-year-old piece of one-inch pipe to support him while he worked on an antenna insulator. Now **Don** is normally a very intelligent individual. He was in radar development in WWII, a former Navy lieutenant, and a GE engineer. And by the way, did I mention he's eighty years old. My recollection is that as I saw my career pass before my eyes, I calmly called up, "*Don, please get down from there. I'll get someone with an extension ladder to do that for you.*" Don looked down sheepishly and replied, "*I thought I could finish before I got caught.*" Then with amazing ease, he swung his leg over the bridge bulwark and pulled himself to comparative safety. I am pleased to report that **Tom Moore** then removed the insulator Don was working on, using proper safety equipment, and it is now in the radio room under restoration. But you know that the Nips and Jerries never had a chance with guys like Don on our side. We just hope his wife doesn't read **SLATER SIGNALS** as she might not let him come down anymore!

See you next month.



The shore facility.