



SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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It's a cold, rainy, October day here in Albany. Turned the heat on this afternoon and watched as they started pulling the docks out at the Albany Yacht Club. We're on the downhill side of season seven.

The first big event of the month was the Change of Command Ceremony for the Albany Naval Reserve Center. That was Saturday, October 2nd at 1430. Our old friend Commander **Don McKnight** was relieved by Lieutenant Commander Christopher Pratt. It was an overcast day with a fair amount of wind. We had a little drizzle during the ceremony, but the event came off without a hitch. As always, it is so great to see the SLATER utilized with the pageantry that accompanies the traditional change of command ceremony, great to know that SLATER can still serve the Navy for which she was originally built. She made a fine backdrop for such an event. Don is not

finished with the Navy. He is moving to the Naval Reserve Center in Glens Falls to take command there. Remembering back to when he took command of the Albany Reserve Center three years ago relieving another old friend **Greg Krawczyk**, Don recalled that in holding his original Change of Command ceremony aboard the SLATER, an awful lot of people thought he was taking command of the ship herself! I didn't know I'd been relieved, but if that's what it takes to get the ship a UIC number and an annual Navy Department appropriation for the SLATER, it might not be a bad idea to let them have her! We wish Don good luck on his new assignment.



The Albany Naval Reserve Center Change of Command Ceremony aboard the SLATER.

We received a wonderful donation from Ed Marks with the USS RIDDLE Reunion group. Ed was one of the reunion hosts and he was aboard for their memorial service with his two sons and their families. After the service, I got chatting with him. He made the off-hand comment that he had to get back to the office. I responded that at his age he was supposed to be retired, and asked what business he was in. He made the mistake of replying "commercial refrigeration." The bells and sirens went off on the 01 level. It just so happened that after several years of faithful service, the galley refrigerator that **Gary Sheedy** had obtained for us had died and we were in the market for a replacement and quick. The Michigan crew was due in the week of October 10th and they'd need a place to keep their food cold. We took him down to the galley, showed him the old unit, the 26" watertight door that it had to fit through, the low overhead, and Ed said he'd see what he could do. Turns out, he even knew **Gary Sheedy**. Gary went to see him, and it turned out they

had a suitable commercial unit for a little over a grand. As we'd always rather trade with DE veterans, we went ahead and ordered it.



Getting the USS RIDDLE memorial reefer into the galley.



Gene Jackey, Ed Marks, Bill Coyle, Bob Callender and Larry Williams pose with the new reefer.

Well, two weeks later on a Monday morning I got a call from Ed that the unit was in, and would we have anybody aboard to unload it? I replied that we had our usual Monday gang of volunteers aboard and to bring it on down. We had about fifteen volunteers aboard, and when the truck arrived I put out a call on the 1MC for all hands under the age of seventy to report to the pier for a work detail. **Larry Williams** was the only one who responded. I revised my request and paged everyone under the age of seventy-five. **Bob Callender** showed up. I finally paged all hands under the age of eighty. I finally got a big enough crew to get the unit off the truck. All hands with the exception of **Clark**

Farnsworth who said he was waiting for the call for all hands under eighty-five. We slid the fridge off the truck without scratching it, got it on the four-wheel dolly, and rolled it aboard the fantail gangway. One of the limitations of our wonderful new aluminum quarterdeck gangway is that the dollies don't fit around it, so the fridge had to be lifted over the gangway handrails and set back down on the dolly for the final run up the port main deck to the galley door. Then over the doorsill and into position against the inboard bulkhead. It fit like a champ. If that didn't make the day good enough, Ed topped it off by saying as he got into his truck, "I think I'm going to make this a donation to you guys. I really want to help get the RIDDLE's name up on the donation board." Thank you Ed for keeping the spirit of the RIDDLE alive on the SLATER.

The crew enjoys Volunteer Appreciation Night.



Cathy Andrian says goodbye to Beth





Paul Czesak and Dave Floyd cut the cake.



Jerry Jones congratulates Dick Smith on winning the Marvin Curry Award.

The new fridge arrived just in time for the annual volunteer appreciation night on Saturday October ninth. As our regular chef **Frank Perrella** was in Italy going to gourmet cooking school, we were on our own this year. Basically, we set the date, sent out emails to the crew, made up a couple posters announcing the party, and sat back to see what would happen. It didn't take long for the crew to put a party together. The crew decided on a spaghetti dinner. **Stan Murawski** stepped forward to do all the shopping and get us stocked with food. **Doug Tanner, Gus Negus, Chuck Teal, Stan** and **Tim Benner** volunteered to do all the cooking. A whole bunch of people brought desserts, bread and dishware. **Art Dott** and the members of the **Capital District Chief Petty Officers Association** had a cake made to honor with a picture of **Dave Floyd's** first ship the USS BELKNAP on it and a photo of him when he first joined the Navy, when he was twelve years old. At least that's the rumor. Dave's not talking. Last winter pushed Dave over the edge and he is leaving us for a Navy retirement home in Washington D. C. Also on hand were **Beth and Mark Spain**. Beth is a Reserve Boatswain's Mate in a small boat unit in Hartford, and her unit has been activated and is heading to Kuwait. It was a chance for all of them to say goodbye. Beth is now in Norfolk being processed and she sends us periodic email updates. Dick Smith and his wife were there with about sixty other volunteers and crew. Every seat on the messdecks forward berthing and the CPO mess were taken, and a few of us ate standing. **Dick and Cathy Andrian** got a great picture of the crew, and the night ended when the crew acted as side boys down to pipe Dave ashore for the last time. We hope it won't be the last time.



The following day the Michigan crew started to arrive for their fall field day week. This year's crew was made up of **Earl Moorhouse, Dick Walker, Dave Marsh, Tom Burrows, Dow Clark, Jim Ray, Roy Brandon, Ron Mazure** and our own **Bob Donlon**, secretary of the CAPDESA Chapter. This was really our last chance to get any major painting done before winter closes in.

Piping Dave Floyd over the side for the last time.

Our regular crew has been working all summer chipping and priming, and these guys got the finish coat on all the work our guys had prepped. On Monday they painted out the foc's'cle deck with deck blue nonskid. On Tuesday they did the main deck portside from the breakwater to the gun three tub. They also prepped the Bosun's locker for painting by cleaning, reinstalling the shelving and masking all the bright work and electrical boxes. On Wednesday they painted out the hull freeboard from the aft camel around the transom working out of the whaleboat. **Jim Ray** found time to practice his welding and repaired a couple expanded metal doors for the Bosun's locker. We even found time to take an hour off to take the crew for a whaleboat ride and give everybody a chance at being coxswain. Thursday they painted out the main deck starboard side, including moving the pile of accumulated scrap metal back to the fantail that clutters the work area around the machine shop. Mind you that in addition to all this, they put two guys on the reefer deck every morning from eight until ten thirty needle gunning paint. On Friday they finished the hull painting aft, cutting in the boottop and the stern lettering. And they restowed all the scrap metal around the starboard workbench. And **Jim Ray** helped **Russ Ferrer** clean the furnace for the winter. Then they all went home for a decent meal.



Ron Mazure chipping the fantail.



The Michigan gang painting the port boot top.

You might get the feeling, reading this, that somehow nine guys did as much work as thirty do in the spring. Maybe the answer was not having **Ron Zarem** there to run the tailgate party every night. Maybe not having a cook made them more productive. Without **Bill Kramer** there, meals weren't quite the thrill that they usually are, so there was nothing left to do but work. Fortunately, we had cooked way to much spaghetti

for the volunteer night, so these poor guys were left with enough spaghetti and meatballs for breakfast, lunch and dinner all week. Whatever motivated these guys, I wish we could bottle it, because we had a great week.



The Michigan crew poses with the regular Tuesday crew aboard the SLATER.

The regular crew is picking up the pieces. Les Yarbrough is back with us after cardiac bypass surgery. He joins **Jerry Jones** and **Larry Williams** in cardiac rehab several times a week, adding to the rumor that we have more guys in cardiac rehab than we have working on the ship. Maybe I'm working these guys too hard. With **Dave Floyd** gone **Doug Tanner** and the ship fitters got the assignment of putting gun two

with the broken train gears back together. They are also working on winterizing the waterline to the shore head. Clark is back on repairing the chocks. **Gus Negus** and **Karl Herchenroder** continue their restoration of the ships service generator in B-3. The electricians have been working on the lights in the lower forward magazines and also the Bosun's locker. **Barry Witte** and **Gary Sheedy** have finally been forced to become deck apes. Gary is so tired of waiting for me to put a crew on the reefer decks chipping that he has enlisted the electricians to do the job. Meanwhile, the chippers are wrapping up outside, working on the fantail. That will be the big project in the spring since we never got to it this year, so you might say that they are getting a head start on next year's work.

We have several unsung heroes, new volunteers, some who have been with us for several months that have yet to be recognized. Foremost among these is **Frank Peters**. Frank came to us through **Jack Madden**. A former librarian, Frank has taken on the daunting task of trying to organize all the books and technical manuals that fall outside the realm of **Pat Perrella's** collection. Working two days a week with his trusty laptop, Frank has accessioned and labeled all the general naval history books that are in the visitor center classroom, and is now working aboard the ship trying to get all the technical manuals cataloged and organized so they can be utilized by the crew. We estimate that when all is said and done we may have 3,000 volumes aboard. We'll see what the final number turns out to be.

Overnight Camping is starting to take off. We have six youth group encampments scheduled for this fall in which up to forty-five campers come aboard to experience shipboard life. We've had Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cubs and Brownies, and all seem to have a great time. Aside from giving the campers a fun experience, the program also serves to educate their leaders, who are so often our community leaders, about the mission and the needs of the SLATER. All hands are involved some way in making this program work, but our special thanks go to our Educational Coordinator **Nancy Buxton**, and her crew of **Paul Czesak, Gordon Lattey, Penny Welbourn, Tom McLaughlin, Chuck Longshore, Les Beauchaine, Ken Kaskoun, Jerry Jones** and **Brigitte Stevens**. This may not be a profit maker this year, but **Rosehn** tells that that we've recouped the \$7,500 we had to pay in additional insurance costs to get the program rolling. Next year we should be in the black!



The SLATER Regulars gather for their annual volunteer night.

Reunion season is over for 2004, but the bookings are beginning to come in for 2005. We have been in touch with the Paul G. Baker and the Gandy groups since the September Slater Signals went out, and they have both taken time to get more info and it looks like they will both be coming here next year! Others that we would really like to see are the USS Jobb DE 707, USS Cofer APD 62, USS Howard D. Crow DE 252, USS Albert T. Harris DE 447, and the USS Breeman DE 104. Again, if you're interested in coming to Albany and seeing the SLATER, you can contact **Jamie Winters**, Group Tour/ Convention Sales Coordinator at the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Inc., 25 Quackenbush Square, Albany, NY 12207 at (518) 434-1217 x106 or 800-258-3582. She is there to make bringing your reunion to Albany as easy as possible.

The funding situation seems to be improving. We received a \$27,000 painting grant from the New York State Department of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. We will use the money over 2005 to purchase paint and supplies, and bring aboard a painter. **Gordon Lattey** has received another \$5,000 gift from **George McNamee** to go towards the restoration of the galley. The two new traditional looking standard Navy stoves have arrived and were off-loaded and are being stored by the Albany Water Department thanks to **Bob Cross**. When we close for the season at the end of November we will bring them aboard and do a complete renovation of the Galley. Our thanks to all who donated for this project. We also received a thousand dollars in matching and volunteer support grants from ExxonMobil thanks to the efforts of **Don O'Neal** of the USS FOSS and **Charlie Furman**. Thanks to all of you who take the time to make sure your company matches your donation.



"Michigan" Dick Walker skippering the whaleboat.

Yes, it's that time of the year and it's getting colder. The season is drawing to a close. This coming Saturday we plan to pull the whaleboat out for the season. We heard from **Kim Nielson** at the Naval Historical Center that the Navy built 26,000 wooden motor whaleboats starting in 1928, until they shifted to fiberglass in the sixties. 26,000 boats, and we have the last one operational. Hope we don't drop it. And be warned. Next month is November, and that means Winter Fund time. In your copy of the SLATER SIGNALS will be included a little return envelope to help us make it through the winter. You've kept us afloat for thirteen years since the SLATER arrived in Manhattan. That deserves a big thank you. **See you next Month.**