

SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers
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It's spring again and as I write this it is April 20th, and I'm happy to say that we are back at the Snow Dock in Albany. It's a beautiful Tuesday, sixty degrees and the sun is shining. It doesn't get much better than this. The month has flown by. We opened on schedule to the public on Thursday April 1 in Rensselaer. Not many people can find us over in Rensselaer and the first two weeks of the month **Les and Annette Beauchaine** were making more money selling dog tags at Crossgates Mall than we were on the ship. Rensselaer is nice, but we needed to get home.



Setting the camels, again. Seems like we just took them out.



Tommy Moore where he is happiest.

We got the camels put in the water on Wednesday April 7th. Tommy Moore put a lot more Styrofoam in the most waterlogged camels. The Water Department has purchased a new crane and our exercise putting in the camels became a training exercise for their crew, to get familiar with their new piece of equipment. The job went perfectly as 15 volunteers showed up to help including the indispensable **Hack Charbonneau, Tommy Moore and first timer Doug Tanner.** It was a great day. About forty and perfectly calm. The crew included **Stan Murawski, Ken Kaskoun, Frank Beeler, Dave Floyd, Andy Desorbo, Gene Jackey, Ed Whitbeck, Tom McLaughlin, Chris Fedden, Larry Williams, Don Shattuck, Les Yarbrough, Gene Cellini, Jerry Jones** and the usual guy I forgot. As always, **Richard and Cathy Andrian** were up at the crack of dawn to take pictures in the rain. We had so many guys that we even kept a crew back on the ship working.

Then we sat tight for moving day. We operated for the two weeks in Rensselaer. If the weather had been good we could have gotten a whole lot of touch up painting done on the starboard side. But the weather stayed lousy. Cold and damp. There was no outside painting that we could do. We went into Rensselaer mode whereby we set up the gift shop in the aft crew's washroom and operate our visitor's reception area from there. It's all pretty primitive. **Pat Perrella** donated a lot of time refining and improving her museum exhibits. The crew worked primarily finishing up winter projects. And we waited. I touched base with Bart and Bill at Empire Marine about twice a week. When Bill stopped returning my emails, I figured it was best to lay low and wait. I emailed him, "I can't remember if you told me that 'I'm really busy so keep reminding me' or I'm really busy so leave me the hell alone. I chose the latter course.

I normally take Thursday off, but I came in on the 16th for a VIP visit that never materialized. I figured I'd take Friday off instead, and stayed up way too late watching TV because I knew I could sleep in. I'm sure you can see where this is going. Friday morning at 0715, I was sound asleep, and my wife was just stepping out the door to go to work when the phone rang. She answered it and of course it was Bill wanting to know if we could be ready to move at 1130. As a one car family, she knew waking me up would probably make her late for work, and as she said, "I almost told him it was your day off and to schedule it for another time." But her sense of duty got the best of her, and she woke me up. There is only one answer. A cheerful, "Sure Bill, be ready by eleven."



Tommy Moore doing some last minute touch up painting.



Pulling in the gangway.

The next call was to Dick Walker to call the move crew. He got right on it. Nancy got me to the ship around 0740, and sped off to school. I immediately sent out a simple email to the move crew, "From Tim, Moving at 1100. Working crew only. No riders." Then I made a couple phone calls to key people, Tommy Moore, Gary Sheedy, Larry Lachance, Gus Negus and Mike Clark. Then I called my wife's school to tell them that she would be a few minutes late. She was walking in the door as I called. Then it was time to make the coffee and wait.

The crew started to straggle in at 0930. This year we were missing a lot of our regulars like **Tanner, Sheedy, Charbonneau, the Beeler Brothers, Marshall, and Farnsworth, Smitty and Witte.** It was a nice sunny morning, temps in the forties. Being a Friday, we had advertised it as a tour day and we had a couple of groups of visitors that were taken through the ship even as we were taking off the wires and starting the generator and singling up the lines. They left the ship about ten minutes before the tugs came alongside, so we had paying customers aboard right up to the last minutes in Rensselaer. The routine is old hat now. Muster the crew and assign stations. **Dave Floyd** ended up in charge on the fantail, and our own **BM2 Beth Spain** handled the focs'c'le. After we put out the call for volunteers for the shore party, the word was electricians and off duty engineers to the bow, seaman and chippers to the fantail. Breakdown and stow the fresh water hose, crank up the emergency diesel, shift to ship's power, loosen all the bolts on the gangway railing, take in the brow safety net, and take off all the wire mooring lines. Break out a steaming ensign and rig it for raising. When the tugs are in sight, email the media that we're moving, and then disconnect the telephone line, power line and start singling up the soft lines. We made up the **HERBERT** to the fantail with **Denny Donovan** at the helm. That's always when I wish we had a couple more set of bitts on the fantail. The **CROW** made fast on the portside just forward of amidships. There was a pretty good breeze coming down river, but nothing to worry about. We let go from forward to aft, shifted colors, the **HERBERT** blew her horn and we were underway for season seven.





Morning muster on move day.



Underway for season seven.

The engineers had a great day. They had a full complement with **Gus Negus** and **Larry LaChance** both aboard. They started the emergency diesel around 0930, and shifted the load around 1030. We stayed on ship's power until around 1400 that afternoon. The diesel worked perfectly, and we arrived at the Snow Dock playing anchors away over the 1MC. One volunteer deserves special mention. **Mike Clark**, our junior electrician and Board President **Frank Lasch's** grandson, played a major role, helping **Ken Kaskoun** and **Larry Williams** in bringing the ship's generator on line, shifting the load, and disconnecting and reconnecting the shore tie. Mike, now eighteen, has been volunteering with **Barry Witte** since he was fourteen, and has grown into a very competent member of the electrical gang. Despite the regular beatings from Barry, he remains a cheerful, well adjusted youth, planning a career in mechanical engineering.



Preparing the heaving line.



Dick Walker demonstrates his form in a return throw.

Though he was absent, Barry Witte realized a long time dream during this move. A new concept was inaugurated on SLATER. I slipped up and actually allowed him to plan something ahead of time. The electricians, IC men, Radio guys and **Erik**, the computer expert, all got together over the winter and decided that a single multi-pair communications cable between the ship and shore would be better than all those "spaghetti wires" that we used to have for things like phone, fax, internet, IMC input and speakers, etc. During the winter months, these groups worked together to get all services into one cable. **Jerry Jones** soldered a 50-pin connector into this cable. One part was wired into the ship's integrated communications systems, and the other part was installed into the trailer. When the ship moved and arrived in Albany, all we had to do was pass the end of the cable onto the ship, plug the connector into its mate, and voila, all the ship to shore circuits were instantaneously working. This works so well that it makes coming and going simple.

The trip home was quick, despite a bit of a northerly breeze. Line handling seemed a little smoother than usual, probably because we had a smaller ratio of Chiefs to Indians. **Bob Cross** had the crane waiting on the Snow Dock when we arrived, and we rigged the aluminum gangway about thirty minutes after the first lines went across. Visitors started showing up, and an hour after tying up in Albany our tour guides were leading groups through the SLATER again. We were back in business. The work continued until about 1500, rigging the shore tie, securing the generator, rigging the fresh water, doubling up lines, securing wire ropes, and moving the gift shop from the aft head to the shore side visitor's center.

We're back in full operation. Rosehn Gipe's promotion efforts are starting to bear fruit. We had two overnight encampments aboard already, and dates are rapidly filling up. In addition, more school groups appear to be booking in this year than last year. We owe a debt to all those who are making the overnight camping program a success including **Paul Czesak, Gordon Lattey, Jack Madden, Chuck Longshore, staffers Penny Welbourn, Nancy Buxton, Rosehn Gipe and all the work that Beth Spain** did putting the program together over the past couple of years. It's already looking to be a better year than last year. As of April 25th we had surpassed last years visitation for the month.



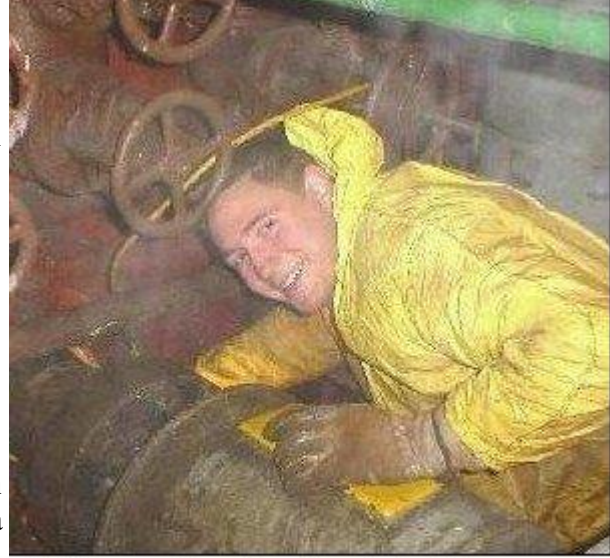
Rigging the brow on the Albany side.

Our crew participated in another scrounging expedition. Stan Murawski drove Barry Witte, Mike Clark, Michael Nadeau and Joe Breyer to Philadelphia Navy Yard where they spent two days picking over the postwar guided missile destroyers ex USS DAHLGREN and BARNEY. Since there was still electrical power on the ships they were very limited in the electrical fixtures they could remove so they concentrated on damage control fittings, valves, radio antennas, and engineering instrumentation. They rented a U-Haul trailer down in Philly and managed to fill it. This was our first run to Philadelphia. We are hoping to make another run to the James River fleet this summer to remove diesel parts.

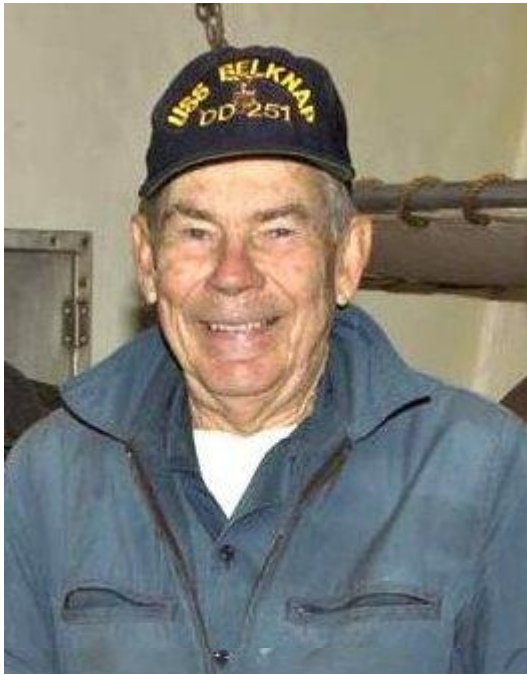
Spring work continues unabated. Fedden, Whitbeck and Hamilton continue chipping in the Bosun's locker forward. **Rocky** has removed the cover from the whaleboat and is sanding, caulking and painting. To take up the slack with the electrical parts restoration, we have **Ray Lammers** back with us after a successful hip replacement. He is now walking pain free. The shipfitters have three projects going, one of which is fabricating an aluminum accommodation ladder to make access to the whaleboat much easier this year. Last year the only access was by Jacobs ladder. Their other projects are rerunning the shipboard sewer discharge line and installing a grinder pump in the CHT tank and tying into the City sewer system ashore. In between these projects they reactivated the fresh water system forward. **Clark Farnsworth** is pecking away at the chocks. The Electricians are working on the sound powered phones and circuits topside to support the drills during the youth group overnight camping program. **Tom McLaughlin** and **Jack Madden** have been sorting through our mass of signal flags. **Les Yarborough** has gotten the sewing machine working and is repairing flags and canvas covers. Barry Witte and Shawn Gordon have been installing an intercom system between the trailer and the ship's office and working on an alarm system for the gift shop. The radio gang has been working on the restoration of the TAJ transmitter and weatherdeck 1mc speakers. **And Erik Collin** continues touch up painting, working on repainting the steel gangway and is continually solving our computer software problems.

We have several big events coming up in May. On 1 May we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the SLATER's commissioning, and officially transfer the SLATER's ordnance to the State of New York. We will also celebrate the retirement of two Navy personnel, **Capt Arthur K. Dunn** and **HM1 Sandra Cox**. That same day the **Michigan Chapter of DESA** will arrive for their annual field day week. And then on May 16th the **USS HUSE Crew** will be reporting aboard. We hope to get a lot of topside painting done while they are here.

All the SLATER volunteers are a special dedicated breed, but one deserves special mention. **Adam Van Horn** is a sophomore-engineering student at RPI and a midshipman in their Navy ROTC program. For the past two years he has dedicated his Saturdays to volunteering aboard the SLATER, the only member of his unit to make such a commitment. He's a football player and a bull of a man who has cheerfully gotten involved in some of the dirtiest details aboard including helping **Larry Lachance** with the firemain piping in the bilges, repacking the main shaft stuffing boxes, and helping me rig wire spring lines when we're securing the ship. He is cheerfully willing to help whenever needed, and like our other student volunteers, brings a special and important aspect to this project--that it's not just a bunch of old guys doing the work. The next generation cares too. I write this because Adam is heading out for the summer, then football next fall, so we lose him until next winter. Thanks for everything Adam.



Midshipman Adam Van Horn in the bilges.



Master Chief Gunner's Mate Dave Floyd, still going strong at 77.

We had a special honor bestowed on one of our volunteers this month. Each year The Times Union Newspaper and St. Peter's Healthcare Services honor ten outstanding area volunteers for their public service with their annual Jefferson Awards. This year we nominated **Master Chief Dave Floyd** for his service aboard the SLATER, as our volunteer with the longest Naval Service. And he was named a medallist along with nine other volunteers. His citation read in part, "Floyd began his lifetime of service to the community by enlisting in the U.S. Navy at age 16, during WWII. He pursued a career in the Navy for 30 years serving as a gunner on the destroyer USS BELKNAP (the old fourpiper) and the Battleship USS WYOMING." I met Dave the day the ship arrived in Albany, and he has been with us an average of four days a week ever since. He has been one of our most dependable guides, and has worked continuously to maintain the

SLATER's ordnance. Some of the crew say he deserves an award just for prolonging the ordnance shack restoration for as long as he has. Congratulations to Dave! There was a nice write up in the April 7th Times Union about all the Jefferson SLATER's ordnance. Some of the crew say he deserves an award just for prolonging the ordnance shack restoration for as long as he has. Congratulations to Dave! There was a nice write up in the April 7th Times Union about all the Jefferson Award winners, but what really caught my attention was the award given to Elizabeth Miller, the citation directly below Dave's. Elizabeth received her award for 35 years as a volunteer at St. Peters Hospital. What is more significant is that Elizabeth is 100 years old. Now that's dedication, and I'm sure hoping for that kind of dedication and longevity in our crew! **See you next month.**