

## SLATER SIGNALS

The Newsletter of the USS SLATER's Volunteers  
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**In our continuing quest to find funds to dry-dock the SLATER, build the permanent mooring, and keep her operating, I'm sitting here looking at several fund raising rejection letters, yet still optimistic.** I have one here from the Department of the Interior saying for the fourth year running, we did not get any funding through the Save America's Treasures Program. I also learned this month that our request for a congressional appropriation for dry-docking funding is dead in the water for this year. Working with **Don Montrym and Frank Lasch**, we have sent out over thirty letters to the multitude of foundation corporations that exist in this country for the purpose of giving money away to worthy causes. One of my recent rejections was from the General Dynamics Electric Boat Division. Now, I've gotten pretty used to rejection letters. When you write corporate foundations blind without someone on the inside pulling for you, the chances of finding success are probably a thousand to one. And, as I said, we've only done thirty letters so far. The routine rejection letter states, "We are unable to give favorable consideration to your request in light of existing commitments."

**This rejection from General Dynamics made me stop and think about our mission in the broadest sense.** Sitting alongside of the General Dynamics rejection letter, on my desk, is an article **Don Montrym** sent me from the Boston Globe telling about how the region's shipbuilding is in jeopardy due to the declining number of Navy ships from Pentagon budget cuts. Could there be a relationship between the two? You remember the concept of Sea Power? That vast vague concept that includes everything from **BM1 Beth Spain** patrolling the Indian Point power plant to protect against terrorism to the **ABRAHAM LINCOLN** launching strikes in the Persian Gulf, to all those huge foreign flag tankers and container ships bringing all that oil and all those goods in from overseas, and the infrastructure to unload, service and maintain those ships. Congress and the Pentagon are generally pretty responsive to the American public, especially when it comes to spending money. If Electric Boat with all those skilled shipbuilders goes away, like almost all of our shipyards have, it's because the public doesn't understand the concept of Sea Power enough to force Congress and the Pentagon to make ships and shipyards a priority. When you need ships and trained sailors it's usually in a hurry, and they don't come quick.

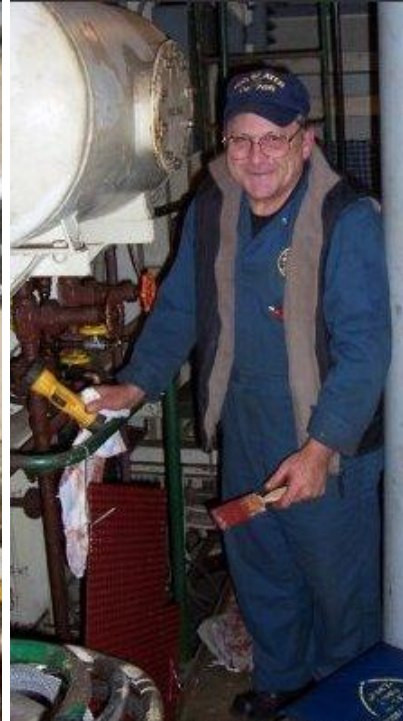
**In 1945 they said the atom bomb made Sea Power obsolete.** Then we had to get all those troops and equipment to Korea in a heck of a hurry. So, where does the public get their understanding of the need for Sea Power? Who is writing about it, and teaching it? Generally, it comes from an understanding of history and what the lack of Sea Power has meant to nations who didn't have it, and what it meant to nations that did. Are they learning this in schools? Check out the U.S. Department of Education website and the No Child Left Behind program. History isn't even mentioned. What's the old line about those who don't learn from the past are doomed to repeat it. Well, they're not learning much about Sea Power in the schools. Hell, a few years back we hoped to enlist local naval reservists as tour guides, saying we could give them a thorough grounding in WWII naval history. We received a polite, "Sorry, but that wouldn't qualify as appropriate training." If that's the Navy's own attitude towards naval history, what would you expect the general public to think?

**So, if I take a deep breath and try to look at this project from a distance, what are we teaching?**

Naval history in the Second World War and the importance of sea power in that time period. Who else is teaching it? The Naval Academy, the NROTC Universities, The History Channel, a handful of museums and the historic naval ships. A ship museum like the SLATER is probably the best chance the average school child or his parent has to be exposed to the reason we need a navy, a merchant marine, ships, and men and women to build, repair and sail them. If we on the SLATER do our job right, the public has a better understanding of the need for Sea Power, and a shipyard welder at Bath Iron Works will keep his job. I think there's a more direct connection between us and General Dynamics than they do. Now, if I could only convince them.



**Don Miller and Earl Herchenroder organizing the mess in steering.**



**Gus Negus painting the engineroom deck plates.**

**There's been a remarkable change in the aft engineroom.** I hadn't been down there for several weeks, since the reassembly and test run of the emergency diesel. I don't know what got into **Gus Negus** and **Karl Herchenroder**, but they must have finally gotten sick of living in the middle of a junk pile, and determined to get the space "squared away." They have sorted, cataloged and cleaned out all of the accumulated trash and junk from the last eight years of restoration work that was piled on top of all the junk the Greeks left. All the spare parts boxes have been sorted and organized. Then they pulled out the lower level deck plates and vacuumed out the bilges and sucked out the oil. They needle gunned the lower deck plates around the emergency diesel and painted them dark terracotta. You'd hardly recognize the old homestead. Back aft, Karl's brother **Earl** and **Don Miller** are continuing to tame the last frontier, aft steering. That's where we piled all the accumulated junk as we pushed the restoration aft through the after berthing spaces. **Chuck Teal** has been fabricating shelves for them as they box and sort their nuts, bolts, washers and plumbing fittings that **Doug Tanner** has been so zealously hoarding ever since he reported aboard.



**Electrician's earning their keep; Ken Kaskoun and Don Shattuck chipping paint off a relief valve.**



**Eighty three year old welder Clark Farnsworth welding up the floater net basket.**

Doug, **Clark Farnsworth** and **Tim Benner** completed the installation of the first of the four new floater net baskets on the starboard side aft. Its mate for the portside is now under construction. The weekday electricians have become shipfitters, too. They removed, restored and reinstalled all the fuel oil overflow pressure relief valves in aft berthing space C-201L. I loved watching electricians chip paint with needle guns. The brass on all eight valves now shines like the ones **Stan Murawski** restored on the messdeck. Speaking of Stan, he had both knees replaced, and was back aboard to visit a week after the surgery. Three weeks after the surgery he was back without the crutches. He's not ready to come back to work yet, but it's only a matter of time. Speaking of tough guys, **Tommy Moore** finished painting out the portside to the forward camels and got the boottop nice and straight so we'll look good when we're across the river.

**Barry Witte's efforts over the past couple years have gotten some fresh young blood aboard.**

We've had midshipmen from the RPI NROTC unit aboard for several Saturdays this fall helping us out. Barry lured them aboard with the promise of technical training in a shipboard environment that will help make them more proficient naval officers upon their commissioning. Of course, in the SLATER tradition, the "technical training in a shipboard environment" usually seems to involve lifting and moving very heavy objects. They worked with **Gus** and **Karl** to lift about two tons of scrap parts out of the aft engine room, destined for the scrapyard. The Greeks were actually worse pack rats than we are, but in addition there were all the old parts from the diesel they rebuilt to hoist out to the pier. **Gus, Karl** and **Dick Walker** spent a day removing steel studs, nuts, bolts and bearings from the bronze and aluminum castings so we can get full value for the non-ferrous metals. In a weak moment I think I said that the engineering department would be the beneficiaries of the income from all this scrap, but I may have made the same promise to several people.



Midshipmen from RPI NROTC: Joe Kimock, Andrew Lang, Ray Osborne, Kevin Guldner, John Camp, Jeff Sangillo, John Hartzell, Andrew Bickford.

The midshipmen also hoisted and stowed a large transformer on to the 01 level, helped secure the accommodation ladder for the winter and have almost completely chipped out the ceramic tile in the CPO head forward. Having run out of heavy things to lift, move and chip, Barry is now trying to find them tasks more worthy of their talents. One gang is tracing out the bilge drain system forward and making sure valves are secure to insure against progressive flooding if we ever put a hole in one of the machinery spaces. Another group is testing and making improvements to the bilge alarm system. And Barry has a fourth group assisting him restoring and installing WWII-era battle lanterns throughout the ship. But there is still the sense that all this training isn't the reason they keep coming back. It's **Doug Tanner's** great Saturday lunches and that pile of donuts and pastries that always seems to appear on the CPO mess table every Saturday morning that may be the true secret to Barry's success.



The USS Franklin listing and on fire.

We hosted a couple special events this month. Most notable was the presentation we held in conjunction with the local Holy Cross College Alumni Association with storyteller **Jay O'Callahan** doing a presentation on his uncle's exploits on the aircraft carrier USS FRANKLIN CV13 in March of 1945. The presentation was held at the **Zaloga American Legion Post 1520** here in Albany, and we are indebted to Al Demizio and the members for donating the hall for the event. Jay's uncle **Father Joseph T. O'Callahan** was chaplain aboard the

fueled and armed Hellcats, Helldivers and Avengers. Father Joe was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroism in helping to save the ship, and he never fully recovered from the smoke inhalation. Based on Father Joe's stories, Jay relates the story of their relationship, beginning as a child, going through his college years at Holy Cross where Father Joe was a teacher, and ending with the commissioning of the USS O'CALLAHAN DE-1051 in 1968. The event was nearly a sell out and Jay's story brought many in the audience to tears.

FRANKLIN when she suffered two catastrophic bomb hits that ignited her deck load of fully



**Bud Lovett's presentation of the new USS McNulty Model that he built.**

**Paul Czesak** organized a Veteran's Day ceremony aboard the SLATER. Most of the events in the Capital District were focused around Saratoga, but Paul's desire to remember the day aboard the SLATER with some brief remarks about the origins of Veterans Day, Taps, a gun salute and the Navy Hymn brought a sizeable crowd down to the ship as well as Fox News and the Times Union. As the Fox reporter said, "We want to cover the hometown event." Showing up on the 24 hour news channel gave us pretty good attendance that day and the following weekend as people brought their families to

have and are serving. **Larry Williams** and **Floyd Hunt** also put on their service dress blues and took the SLATER jeep to the Albany Veterans Day parade. Unlike some past parades, the jeep performed flawlessly keeping up the trend that for now, all SLATER's gear is working just fine. We also received two beautiful donations of DE models this month. USS MCNULTY shipmate **Bud Lovett** built a second USS MCNULTY model for the museum, and it is now on display aboard. And **Duncan Brown** donated a model of the USS DECKER DE-47 giving us a fine example of one of the short hull EVARTS-class ships.



**Erik Collin and Frank Lasch putter around while waiting to be lifted onboard.**

**So, here we are. Into the last month of the tourist season already.** How did that happen and where did the year go? Our eighth season in Albany is almost over. We've had our last overnight encampment. We're down to our last two weeks of being open to the public. We began the month with getting the whaleboat aboard. In **Rocky** and **Roy's** absence, **Erik Collin** and **Frank Lasch** warmed up the engine for the last time, cast off and motored around the starboard side. They had to lay off while we got the davits swung out and the falls lowered.

This year the weather was perfect. No rain or wind. Some people suggested we postpone for a bad day. We still haven't resolved the problem of how to keep the two falls from binding together on the capstan, but with Doug's stoppers, we got her level, two blocked and swung in. We lowered her on to the chocks and got her secured. Then **Gene Jackey** got out the pressure washer and washed down the bottom while the marine growth was still soft.



**Heaving in on the whaleboat.**

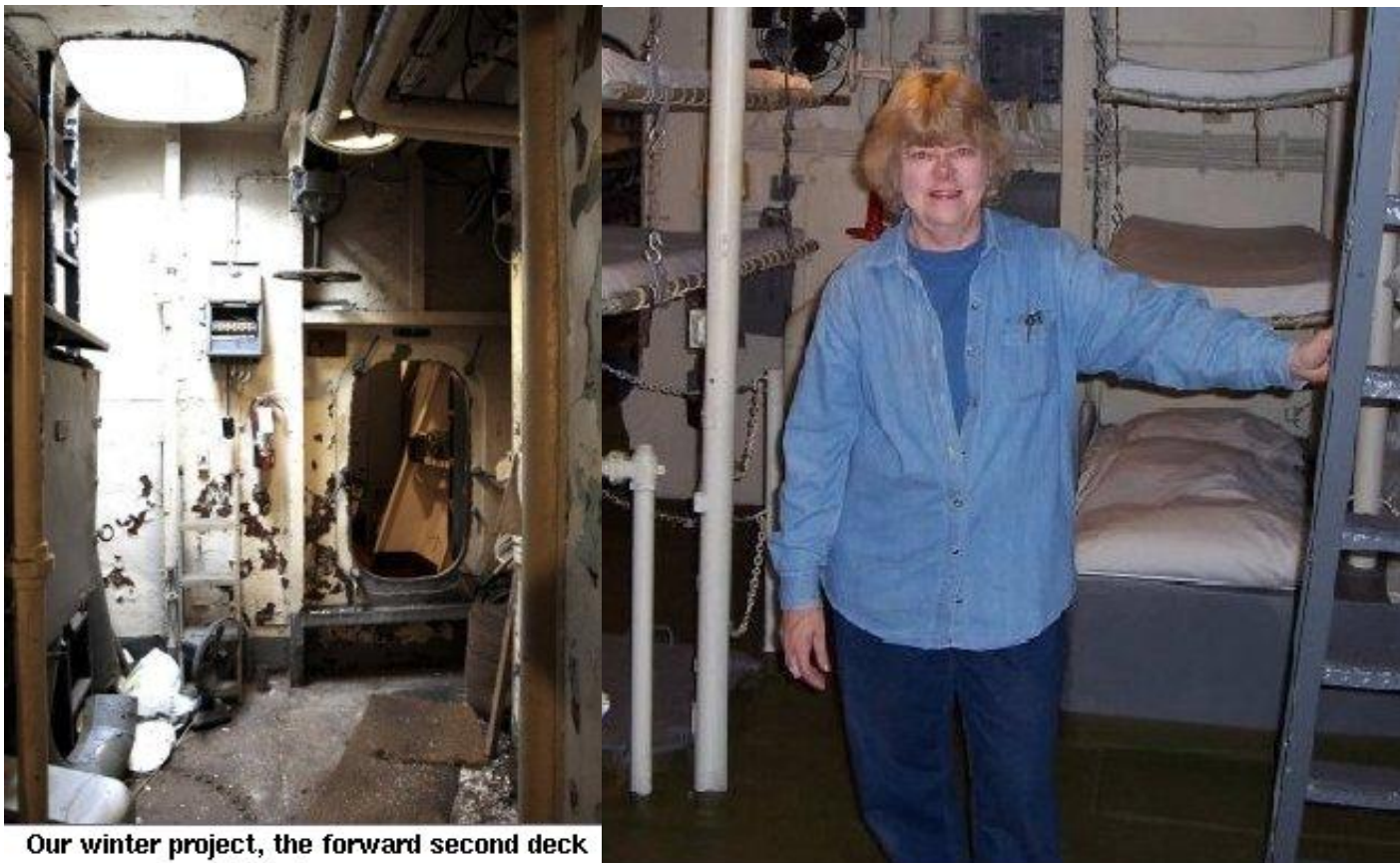
**Erik took charge of laying up the boat for the season.**

Following Rocky's instructions, he got all four bilge plugs out and removed and charged the battery. On the engine he cleaned the water filter and drain by removing the plug at the bottom of the filter, both bilge pumps, filled the fuel tank and added fuel stabilizer, and circulated enough antifreeze through the engine so she's good to thirty below zero. He rolled out the hull with a mixture of linseed oil, a little turps and a dash of Japan dryer to help keep the hull from drying out. Erik said if the traffic weren't so loud, you could hear the wood purr. Then he rigged a lifeline cable with a turnbuckle over the boat and Bob, Gene and Don helped him stretch the boat cover over it and lash it down. She's secure for the winter.

**Then there's the fresh water.** Doug Tanner and Tim Benner spent a Saturday draining the fresh water system for the winter. They drained all the plumbing at the low points in the machinery spaces and blew compressed air through the system. They flushed out the new sewage holding tank, pumped it dry, then put antifreeze in the tank and the commodes. They disconnected the fresh water waste lines running to shore, drained them and stowed them for the winter. They drained both hot water tanks. We're back on bottled water for the coffee and cleaning for the next five months. This is where we have to thank the gang from **Wildwood School**. As you old time SIGNALS readers know, a group of learning disabled kids come aboard twice a week to help us with maintenance, and they keep our water jugs filled through the winter. We're lucky that through the end of the month we have the shore head on the pier. When we go to Rensselaer, we're back to the Port-a-John.

**Won't be long until we're closed for the winter.** What that means to us is no tourist income for four months. It's up to **Les and Annette Beauchaine** selling dog tags at Crossgates Mall, and **your donations** to keep us afloat until spring. **Yes, it's time for the annual Winter Fund solicitation.** This is where we ask all of you who believe in what we're doing to reach into your wallets and help us keep the ship going through another winter. If you're already a member, we're asking you to dig a little deeper. If you're not a member, this will make you a member. We're asking you to give what you can, but the suggested Winter Fund donation is one hundred dollars. If you can't give that, give less. If you're Bill Gates, then maybe we can leave the shipyard under our own power. In all seriousness, the Winter Fund Drive is a most important event for the SLATER because it gets us through the roughest months without eating up our savings. We need you aboard.

**And you can help us by doing your holiday shopping at the SLATER.** Consider stopping by the Ship's Store. That's the part of the operation that remains on the Albany side year round. Rosehn and Eric will have it open Monday through Friday through December 23. Call 518-431-1943 for hours. If you can't make it in person, they'll take phone orders, as well.



**Our winter project, the forward second deck passageway and heads.**

**Pat Perrella has the museum 'mothballed' for the winter.**

**Work on the SLATER doesn't stop in the winter.** This is the time we get most of our interior restoration work done. Our plan for this winter is to restore the second deck spaces aft of the anchor windlass room, forward of the CPO Mess, continue work on the reefer decks, and keep Gus and Karl going in the aft motor room. We're hoping to repaint the CPO Mess also.

**I remain incredibly optimistic about the SLATER.** The enthusiasm and dedication of the people I work with every day is inspirational. When you look at how far we've come with so little, and yet we have almost a million dollars in the bank and no debt on the project. I've lost a lot of good friends over the years, but new volunteers always report aboard to take their place. So far several vendors and foundations, including **The Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation**, have responded positively to our foundation drive and we have raised almost \$10,000. And the deeper I get into the corporate/foundation fundraising, I realize there is incredible opportunity out there. All we have to do is get our message across to the right benefactor. Just have to try harder. So, until we find that person, I'll do what I always do around this time of year and ask you all to dig a little deeper for SLATER.



**Ken Kaskoun, Bill Coyle and Smitty hanging the port forward life raft.**



**Russ Ferrer with some of the Key Bank Volunteers after they got the train gear reassembled on gun 1.**

Each year, when we close for the season, we lose our main source of revenue for the winter months, our visitors. Back in 1999 on we appealed to the local volunteers, those who already give the most, to help us through the winter. We asked those who could afford it to give some more, asking each to donate an extra \$100. These local volunteers, who give their time, also give over \$10,000 a winter to help pay the heating bills and keep us afloat.

Based on that success, we now go to all our supporters and ask that you give an extra hundred to help us through the lean months, so we don't have to dip into our savings. As I know one has to lead by example, my \$100. is already in along with several of our most dedicated volunteers.

We've turned down the heat, and dimmed the lights. But we need your help to keep from dipping further into our working capital to get through the winter, so we will have funds for the dolphins and dry-docking and other projects that will come up down the road.



**Teamwork keeps us going.**

**For those of you who receive this newsletter online this is one time I beg you to step away from the computer, grab you check book and help keep this newsletter coming. You can print out the place it in an envelope addressed to USS SLATER, PO Box 1926, Albany, NY 12201-1926. If you prefer telephones, you can call Rosehn at 518-431-1943 and she can take your credit card number over the phone. I don't advise emailing your card number, and this is not a secure website. If you're not a member, this act of generosity will make you one.**



# USS SLATER 2005-2006 Winter Fund Donation

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Make Check Payable to DEHM Winter Fund and mail to:

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USS Slater DE-766, PO Box 1926  
Albany, NY 12201-1926

Donations to DEHM are tax deductible, IRS 501 (c) (3).



How can you not support these guys?