September began with a great Labor Day on Monday. We were open to the public and our year of breaking attendance records continued. The following Tuesday we welcomed Albany County Executive Dan McCoy, who hosted their monthly Honor-a-Vet program aboard USS SLATER. This month was special to us, as the honoree was our own RADM Paul Czesak, NYNM (Ret), who passed away in December 2012. It was a fitting tribute to one of our heroes. Admiral Czesak served in the US Navy from 1953-56 aboard the USS Kearsarge. He then served in the US Naval Reserves from 1956-83, and the NY Naval Militia from 1983-96. During his military service, the Admiral was presented the National Defense Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the Korean Service Medal, and the China Service Medal. In addition, Admiral Czesak began volunteering aboard USS SLATER back in 1999, and his service included everything from chipping paint to serving as a Trustee. Most notably, he served as our protocol officer and organized all our ceremonies. His passing was a great loss to our project. Family and dignitaries who attended included his widow Anne, his Daughter Jodi, County Executive Dan McCoy, Congressman Paul Tonko, former Albany Mayor Jerry Jennings, and Assemblywoman Pat Fahy. My special thanks to Glenn Harrison and Charles Burkes who helped coordinate the event.
On September 6th we hosted the Chief Petty Officers and CPO Selects from the Navy Nuclear Training center in Ballston Spa. About 60 CPOs and Selects reported for a day of volunteer work aboard the ship. The main project was carpentry--building some additional shelving in the lower level of B-2, so we can get all that gear that was in the PODs organized. Secondary projects included cleaning the bilges in B-3, the deckplates in B-4, and assisting with the grinding and welding on the davit pedestal repair project. In addition, the Selects stood a quarterdeck watch in dress whites, which was a really nice touch. We almost felt like we were back in commission. Special thanks to Chiefs Bernie Smith and Art Dott, who made a lasagna dinner for the Chiefs, in addition to their regular duties of making lunch for our volunteers. It was a particularly hot, muggy Saturday, giving the CPOs an appreciation of the hardships faced by the old sailors, and a new appreciation of their air-conditioned ships.

The USS HUSE annual work party was held from September 7th to September 12th. Their usual time frame for the SLATER work party was in May; however, the drydocking of the ship prevented this from happening and necessitated the change to September. The weather during their week on board was outstanding, with comfortable days and cool evenings. Coordinator George Amandola brought in a total of eighteen volunteers during the week, and accomplished a number of tasks that needed to be addressed. The volunteers consisted of 15 men and 3 ladies. The ladies were housed in Officers Country, and the guys in the
aft crew’s quarters. One of the ladies remarked on how comfortable the officer’s bunks are. That elicited several quiet comments from the guys sleeping in crew bunks.

The chow prepared by the USS HUSE gourmet cooks, John Malvasio and John Nicotra, was plentiful and tasty. One of the desserts they prepared was a pineapple upside down cake that was outstanding. However, we did not get any bear claws or cinnamon buns. Bear claws can be expensive but I was told cinnamon buns would make it to the menu next year. Ernie Aeschilman and Anthony Amandola worked in the engine room, the port and starboard shaft alleys, rewiring light and installing new lights. In addition, they worked on securing the fire extinguishers in a number of locations. Walter Bringslid worked the mess deck, and ensured it was set up for each meal and cleaned up afterwards. In addition, while off duty from the mess deck, he assisted in a number of other projects when additional hands were needed. Joe Delfoe spent his time chipping and painting the superstructure overhang on the 01 deck. Joe also participated in a number of other projects that required extra hands. Joe’s running mate, Brandon Easley, helped with chipping and painting and doing a lot of the heavy lifting. Brandon also worked on the boat davits on the starboard side, burning away some wasted metal. He had help from Walter and Joe as needed.
Gail Esker, whose Dad is Pete Maylone, an Air Force vet, Sharon Roberts, and Robin Larner spent a lot of hours emptying, repairing, painting, and reinstalling life rope floater nets. When that was completed, they worked in the after steering compartment, trying to clean up an indescribable mess that had been stored there. This is the start of a program to restore after steering. Bill Mehan, who was at his usual post in charge of the paint locker, was also recruited and participated in these projects. Paul Suzdak and his Dad, Marc Suzdak, were tasked with chipping and painting the 40mm guns and mounts. This carried on the tradition of the late Stan Suzdak, Marc’s father, who spent so many years caring for those mounts. This required them to crawl under the guns mounts and chip, scrape, Corroseal, prime, and paint the undersides, as well as the platforms and guns. Guy Huse and Stan Dickstein worked in B-4, continuing the restoration of the aft fire and flushing pump.