

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

February 20 12

Chartered: Nov. 1, 1985. Past Presidents: *Nelson Oats, *Harold Ballard, *W. O. Mullin, *Verle Oringderff, *Harold Trammell, *William Oakley, Frank Polenta, *S. L. Baker, *George Payne, *Harry Steinert, & *Al Clement. *deceased Current Officers: President-Mike Pixler, phone contact: 817-929-1557, First Vice President-[open for now], Second Vice president-Jim Rau, phone: 817-367-3343, Secretary/Treasurer-Blanche Howerton, phone: 817-578-6542, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, Lillie Payne, Historian-Ruby Pixler, Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings.

Monthly Meeting is held on the second Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the Northside Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. Dues are \$10 a person annually and are effective from Oct. to Oct.

Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west. It accesses the downtown Fort Worth area from the south. Exit north on Henderson St. After a couple of miles it crosses a fork of the Trinity River and becomes State Hwy 199 which goes to Lake Worth, and the Fort Worth Nature Center & Reserve. When you reach the traffic light at the intersection of 18th St. NW, turn right [east] and go up the hill four blocks to Homan St. Turn left [north], and go a block to the Y. Stay right and continue into the Center's rear parking lot. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

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WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES : Norbert & Betty Gebhard, Grandview, TX 02/12 [#18] and Ernest & Helene Hubbard, Fort Worth, TX 02/14 [# 66]!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Wanda Henry, Gladewater, TX 02/25; Frank Polenta, Benbrook, TX 02/22; and Albert Scott, Tyler, TX 02/03.

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, ON SATURDAY, Feb. 11, 2012. Weather: Clear – Temp: 40° : Attendance: 17.

President Mike Pixler called the meeting to order at 11:10 AM and welcomed everyone. He read a "laughing matters" from the Senior News. Sgt.-At-Arms, Troy Jones, led the pledges to the flags.

Blanche Howerton, Sec./Treas., read the minutes of Jan. 14, 2012. Tony Rodriguez made a motion to accept as read, seconded by Troy Jones. Blanche then gave the finance report. Steve Porter made a motion to accept the report as read, seconded by Bill Stallings, motion carried.

Pres. Pixler announced a wedding anniversary for Helene and Ernest Hubbard of Fort Worth, 66 years together on 2/14/12. We all sang happy anniversary to them.

Pres. Pixler gave a report on the members which he had contacted, Bill Stallings, Newsletter Editor and VP Jim Rau also reported on members which they had called.

Member Steve Porter told us of his wife's birthday. Being born on leap year, Feb. 29, she is 21 years old. They have been married 57 years.

Pres. Pixler made a statement that we have 32 "CCC Boys" as members of Cowtown Chapter #123. It is our privilege to have them in our chapter. Pres. Pixler then showed a film on Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Lake Worth and the work done by CCC.

Larkin Dilbeck gave us some history of his CCC days. It is very interesting to hear stories of "The Boys."

Tony Rodriguez passed the donation can. The drawings for door prizes were held. Ernest Hubbard won the first door prize and donated it back to the chapter. Other prizes were won by Troy Jones, Larka Tetens and Bill McKee.

Pres. Pixler blessed the food. Motion to adjourn was made by Bill Stallings, seconded by Tony Rodriguez, motion carried and meeting adjourned at 12:15 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by
Blanche Howerton, Sec./Treas.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER 3-11-2011

The Subject for This Corner is: Time to do it Right.

First of all, that is not all the quote from the legendary UCLA basketball coach, John Wooden. The complete quote is, "If you don't have time to do it right; when will you have time to do it over?"

With everything we are involved with nowadays, when would we have time to do it over? I can only answer that question for myself. We are so busy that we just do it right the first time, because we know we will not get back to it later. That's the way things were done back in the day; that day being between 1933 and 1942, with the Civilian Conservation Corps. The "boys" had no choice but to do it right the first time. They built, cleared, moved, planted, and, and, and, rebuilt the United States. They did not know how to do it wrong. Once you put that foundation stone in place, that's it, you can't go back and do it over. Once the trees are planted, the electrical and phone lines are installed, or the irrigation trench dug, or the road constructed, well, you get the point. They did not have time to do it over. The members of the CCC were so into making this nation great, how could they ever be forgotten?

The answer is, they are not forgotten. That's the reason and purpose of the CCC Legacy; not to forget the "boys" and their accomplishments. If we in the CCC Legacy don't have time to do it right, we will not have time to do it over. The mission takes time and money. Sometime, it may seem that there is nothing happening. Rest assured

that the CCC Legacy is always moving forward in support of the Civilian Conservation Corps. We will do it right, we have no choice. ~~We will not have the time in today's world to do it over.~~

Hope to see all of you at our next meeting, 10 March, 2012. Come and enjoy the moment, and share your story with us.

Mike Pixler, President, CCC Legacy Chapter 123

Reports on Our Members

As mentioned above Ernest & Helene Hubbard are celebrating their 66th anniversary this year, and were with us ~~for this month's meeting. They brought as their guest Helene's sister, Betty, who hails from Minnesota.~~ Why anyone from Minnesota would want to travel south from there this time of the year is hard to understand. Actually Betty told us that it has been unusually warm for them this year; more than most people remember. She said they have had very little snow – none before Christmas, and it has been down to zero only once. She has visited with us before, and we were very glad to have her with us again.

Frank Borello of Alvin, Texas, south of Houston, reports that he is doing OK.

Lillie Payne says that her eye problems still do not permit her to drive from Denton to our meeting, but she has hopes to appear in March.

Since our Poet Laureate, Jack Bragg, depends on Lillie for his ride, he could not make the meeting either.

Curtis & LaVaughn Greer sent us a card thanking us for being at their daughter ~~Deidie Carpenter's~~ memorial service. Curtis tells us that LaVaughn has been showing some improvement.

We talked with Allen Wilkerson of Fort Worth who is doing OK, but has to stay close to ~~home due to his wife's~~ medical condition. She recently had to be hospitalized but is now home, and Allen says that she is some better than she has been for some time.

A Member Remembers the Battle of the Bulge

At our meeting, member Larkin Dilbeck, told us of an incident that he remembers from his service in WW II. When he was sent overseas to France, he was the company clerk in a tank outfit. Being a man short in one of their tanks, the company sergeant made Larkin the gun-loader and machine gunner on that tank. Their unit was soon rushed into Belgium to help relieve our troops trapped in what became known as The Battle of the Bulge. As Larkin says, it was not the best of times to be experiencing your first taste of combat. It was bitter cold, and ~~Larkin's tank was~~ moving down a road in the lead followed by a few of the others in their unit. They were heading towards a small Belgian village at a crossroads, when they rounded a sharp bend in the road, and came face to face with three German tanks with their guns pointed straight at them. ~~Larkin's driver slammed their~~ tank in reverse and backed around the bend to cover. No fire came from the Germans though, and after a bit, they cautiously moved forward again to see why. All was quiet. Larkin remembers approaching the tanks and the few buildings in the village. All was devastation, with dead and dying Germans and a few villagers lying in the snow covered ruins. He says the only thing moving was a German police dog guarding one of the houses, which growled when he approached. They learned that an American artillery barrage the day before had zeroed in on this crossroads and caused all of the devastation.

Larkin says much is made of the effect of the severe weather on the American effort, but he says that the weather was what greatly influenced the German defeat. The heavy snow and cold caused the narrow roads to be clogged and almost impassable with their tanks and equipment as they attempted their breakout. The tanks soon ran out of what little fuel they had, and as such, became sitting ducks for allied artillery and tank fire.

Jim and Bill's Excellent Adventure

A few weeks ago on a beautiful Saturday, Jim Rau and I went on a little excursion to check out one of the trails that the boys of CCC Company 1816 laid out when they were building the planned Lake Worth State Park which is now the Lake Worth Nature Center and Refuge. Our goal was to find and photograph the condition of the remaining structures on this particular trail of about three miles length, and also to see if it would be possible to take some of our members on a tour of them. I assumed that at most we would be able to do it in about three hours or so. Yeah, sure! We started about 10:15 AM and got back to our cars about 4:20 PM. We found that ~~when "The Boys" laid out a trail, they laid out a trail!~~ It included a little of everything. There were loops with many changes in elevation; walks in deep woods and open areas; a number of small bridges over creeks, both dry and flowing; and high overlooks facing the lake with places to rest and enjoy the scenery.

Our first destination was Lone Point. After parking off Shoreline Drive, we picked up the trail that meanders through the quiet woods. The trail soon began climbing rather steeply up the escarpment with rock work and stone steps firmly in place just as ~~"The Boys" built it almost 75 years ago.~~ At the top is the "Lone Point" structure with its massive stone-laid walls still in place, but missing the wood roof as it was built originally. The view here is impressive; you look out and down at the lake with Greer Island to the east. While we were there that morning we saw a beautiful flock of white pelicans flying in single file formation across the lake. About 30 yards or so from Lone Point, we found the first of the standard CCC built rock two room open top privies. It was as solid as the time it was constructed. From here the trail stays generally level at the higher elevation in open grassland. Being a Saturday, we began meeting others making use of the trail, both singles and groups of two or three, and some with dogs on leash. We were impressed with the number of people that were making use of the park, and also how clean the trail was. The trail was obviously being appreciated and respected.

Soon the trail began looping through some trees and descended into a small valley and crossing a small wood bridge and then climbing again. This was repeated several times, and we had to stop to catch our breath. Even with the drought we found just off the trail, a small spring of water that was probably a draw for wildlife in the park.

At one point when we came upon an old rock wall off to one side of the trail, we discovered some foundations of what may have been a home. It was on one of the highest points in the park with a long concrete ledge build along the edge. There was quite a view, but we learned that it does not date from the CCC time. Suzanne Tuttle, the Park Director, says it may have been a dog kennel at one time.

Eventually we came to our other major destination, namely the view point and structure of Rest-a-While. Similar to Lone Point, but a little larger, it had two large rock structures, open in the middle, with a wooden beamed roof, which is now gone. It also had a great view of the lake, and a fairly steep climb up to it on CCC built steps. ~~On one of the original plans of the CCC, this place was named "Resterwile."~~ We here found a family of five doing just that. In conversation with them we learned, though Texans originally, they were missionaries living in Africa on the shore of Lake Tanganyika. You just never know who you might run into in such

unexpected places. Like "Lone Point" this one also has lost its original massive wood beamed roof. A short walk from this one also, we found another solidly built two room privy; it even had two windows – right up town! Both here and at Lone Point, and other high points on the trail, we found the massive CCC built concrete and stone picnic tables. Most of them have been pushed over on their sides by vandals, but OK otherwise. They are too solidly built, and in fact, it will be something of a project just to put them upright again.

This brings us to the end of our excellent adventure, but we hope to bring some of our members to see some of what we have seen. We also are working on ways we can easily transport them to avoid the long hikes and steep climbs. Stay tuned.

Mr. G.M. Brice Remembers

A few days ago we had occasion to call long time member and "CCC Boy," G. M. "Boots" Brice to check on him. He and his wife live in Oakwood, Texas, which is in Southeast Texas halfway between Buffalo and Palestine. Boots told us that he was having a little trouble getting around these days since he has just recently [Jan. 30] had his 92nd birthday. He felt like talking though, and we asked him to relate some of his story to us.

Boots was born in 1920, and, after high school, he joined the CCC in 1937 and was sent to Benson, Arizona. He does not remember his company number, but they did soil conservation type work: namely digging irrigation ditches, building stock tanks, and using rock spreaders to move rocks around bases of hills to control erosion. At the end of his six month enrollment, Boots left to return to East Texas to work in the oil fields. In 1940 he enlisted in the U.S. Army Infantry and was assigned to the 41st Inf. Division. He was first sent to El Paso and then on to Fort Lewis, Washington, near Spokane. From here he went to Camp Roberts in California. He was here on Dec. 7, 1941, when the U.S. went to war. Soon after, his unit was sent to San Francisco, a port of embarkation, to go overseas. Boots and others were assigned to do guard duty on their troop ship. They were on eight hour rotating shifts, and it was monotonous duty. One day after their shift ended they went AWOL and headed for the city. They were only gone six days, but they were court-martialed anyway. Their lieutenant said that they were confined to camp until further notice. This proved too boring for Boots and his two buddies, Blanton and Bowden, and San Francisco was too enticing, so they went AWOL again. They were having a good time until one of them looked out in the Bay and noticed their ship leaving the dock. They knew they were in for it now, but returned to their base to face the music. This time they were sent to Angel Island out near Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay. They were put on KP and other undesirable details and told there would be no more leaves for them. They put up with this for a while, but put in for a leave anyway, and it was granted to them! They missed the boat back to the island, and were AWOL again.

Boots looks back on this, and to this day, wonders how they avoided being court-martialed and sent to prison or some other severe punishment. The one thing he thinks was in their favor was when they went before their Colonel, and he asked why they kept going AWOL, they told the truth; that they "just forgot to come back." Whatever the reason, they were kept in the Army and re-assigned to the 32nd Infantry at Fort Ord. Soon they were on another troop ship headed out in the Pacific going to Australia. Their first night out of San Francisco, the ship got lost in a storm, missed their convoy, and wound up by itself with no protection. Eventually a Navy cruiser found them, and they were on their way. It was standard to be put on KP or other details while aboard, but every time Boots and his buddies were called, they did not answer and hid. When someone was sent to look for them, they were so new to the outfit that no one knew what they looked like. They never pulled a single detail. It was nearly a month later that they landed at Adelaide, South Australia.

While in Australia Boots and 112 others were transferred into a quartermaster depot unit, and they were sent up to Townsville in far North Australia. From here they were sent to Milne Bay, New Guinea; off-loaded onto barges; and began building a new supply base there. The Japanese soon discovered the new base. In the evening the men would listen to "Tokyo Rose" on the radio because she played a lot of popular American music along with the usual propaganda. She would say hello to the new boys at Milne Bay and announce that the next morning at 1000 hours they would be bombed. Boots remembers that sure enough, you could set your watch by it; the Japanese bombers would hit them at 1000 on the dot. The Australians there had a small number of P-40 fighters and they were not afraid of tearing into the bombers, and did manage to shoot down some of them. ~~Boots's own unit was given credit for shooting down one of the bombers with rifle fire alone. Then the Japanese~~ landed troops a few miles down the bay from them and headed their way, but the Australians brought in an infantry unit, and after heavy fighting, managed to eliminate the Japanese threat.

Their supply base had two big docks that they worked off of supplying the U.S. and Australian forces that were island hopping back toward the Philippines and on to Japan. Boots was here about a year, and was then returned to the States to Fort Ord where he was for about six months. Then he was sent to San Antonio for six months where he was assigned to a Military Police unit. He says that this was bad duty because there were too many bars in San Antonio with too many men in the bases around the city. He was sent to Brownsville, Texas, and then to Huntsville where he was a prison guard at a POW camp. Finally it was back to San Antonio where he was discharged after serving four years and six days – most of that time overseas and in New Guinea.

Boots went back to oil field work after the war. He drove a truck, did some "rough-necking," and was a driller. He has been married to his third wife for 27 years. His first two wives died. He and his first wife had one son. We enjoyed our time with Boots, and even though he lives too far to make the meetings, he is still an important part of our group.

The Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy is a non-profit organization dedicated to research, preservation, and education to promote better understanding of the CCC and its continuing contribution to American life and culture. *"I propose to create a Civilian Conservation Corps to be used in simple work, more important, however, than the material gains will be the moral and spiritual value of such work.*

" --FDR, 1933

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