

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

January 2016

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-Wes Culwell, phone contact: 817-246-8197, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], Secretary/Treasurer-Steve Porter, phone contact: 817-244-6714, Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, (volunteers), Historian/Reporter at Large & Newsletter Editor-Bill Stallings, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the *second* Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM at the North Side Multipurpose Center, 1801 Harrington [North], Fort Worth, TX 76106. If you are using a GPS display, this address is the FRONT of the building; our meeting room is at the BACK, off of Homan St. The door to the meeting room is on the right as you approach from the parking lot, and will have a CCC sign on it.

Driving Directions: Interstate Hwy 30 runs east & west, and 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 & Refuge. 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. If coming from Loop 820 North, go south on Hwy 199 and left on 18th St. Our meeting room door with the CCC sign is to the right as you approach the building. Our dues are \$10 a person annually, effective from Oct. to Oct. Bring a friend & enjoy fun, fellowship & food. Sign the register for you may win the \$10 door prize.

MINUTES OF MEETING, CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, January 9, 2016

Weather: Cloudy, Temp: 39°, Attendance: 7.

The meeting was called to order at 11:11 AM by Secretary/Treasurer Steve Porter. No other chapter officers were present.

The Invocation was offered by Jim Rau. The pledges to the flags were led by Sgt.-at-Arms Troy Jones.

Secretary/Treasurer Porter reminded the members of the purpose of the CCC Legacy to educate and further the understanding of the Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942, and its impact on America today.

The minutes of December 2015 meeting were in the newsletter which all members had received. Motion to accept the minutes as published was made by Troy Jones and seconded by Jim Rau. All in favor motion passed.

The financial report was given by Secretary/Treasurer Steve Porter. Motion to accept the report as given was made by Jim Rau and seconded by Troy Jones. All in favor motion passed.

Larkin Dilbeck was hospitalized on January 6, 2016, with pneumonia. Bill Stallings visited him and reported that Larkin is improving and may be released soon. Kathy Mayes Smith reported by email that her husband, Bill, was admitted to a Dallas hospital on January 3, 2016, with pneumonia and late stages of Parkinson's disease. The prayers of chapter members go out to these men and their families.

Farris and Bernice Brewer celebrate their 67th wedding anniversary on January 29. Birthdays this month include Toy Rodriguez (1/1/31), Edward Schuckert (1/3/25), Fay Clement (1/9), Robbie McKee Warner (1/14/56), and Boots Brice (1/30/22). Congratulations to all and Happy Birthday was sung to Tony by the members.

Secretary/Treasurer Porter reported to the members on the status of IRS Form 990-N (E postcard) which was submitted but rejected because IRS database of tax exempt organizations has not been updated since November 2015, and our approval was given on December 3, 2015. Form will be retransmitted whenever database is updated. Chapter membership roster showing members active as of December 1, 2015, will be submitted to CCC Legacy Inc., February 1, 2016.

No update on TEXAS 2016 gathering was available. Members discussed hotel const and ways to assist CCC "Boys" with expenses. Ideas will be passed on to the Event Committee

The can was passed for donations to the chapter. The door prize was won by Bill Stallings who returned it to the chapter. New member Stephen Jones was welcomed to the chapter.

The blessing was offered by Jim Rau. Motion to adjourn was made by Bill Stallings and seconded by Tony Rodriguez. Secretary/Treasurer Porter adjourned toe meeting at 12:09 PM. A delicious meal was enjoyed by the members. Next meeting will be February 13, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Porter, Sec/Treasurer

CHAPTER ETERNAL

William R. "Bill" Smith, Jr., wife of Kathy Smith, both members, passed away on January 18, 2016, having had a long struggle with Parkinson's disease. Bill was born Sept. 22, 1926, in Mansfield, Louisiana, and attended schools there. At age 17 he joined the U.S. Navy and served on the USS Crowley in the Pacific during WW II. He was trained as a radar technician, and his ship was heavily engaged in the Leyte, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa battles. His alertness helped avert a collision with his ship and an oil tanker during the famous typhoon with its 70 foot waves that struck the Navy fleet off of Okinawa. Using his radar he warned of an approaching Kamikaze plane and a Japanese torpedo boat, and both were destroyed. His ship was part of the protection for the USS Missouri at the surrender in Tokyo Bay which ended the war. After the war, Bill got his degree in Physics from the University of Louisiana, and became a gas & oil engineer for a pipeline company, then later going with Sun Oil Company. He and Kathy retired to Richardson, TX, in 1986. He is survived by wife Kathy, son James Smith from

his previous marriage, step-children, Dr. & Major Titus Brown of the U.S. Army, Thomas Brown and Cynthia Brown, and grandchildren and step-grandchildren. Dr. Brown gave a moving eulogy to his step-father at the services on January 23, 2016, at John Calvin Presbyterian Church in Dallas. Bill was too young to have served in the CCCs, but Kathy's father was an army officer, Col. Charles Mays, in charge of one of the first CCC camps in the U.S. She has written a book about him and the men of his camp: *Gold Medal CCC Company 1538*. It was at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

A PENNSYLVANIA CCC BOY REMEMBERS A CHRISTMAS PAST

This story is from a NACCCA JOURNAL of January 1989

It would be my first Christmas away from home; in fact it was my first time any season away from home. I was just 17 years old. I had just lost my mother; my father had died years ago, and I felt totally alone in this world.

A move from East to West:

It was a clear October day. A train whistle broke the silence of the Cumberland Valley and I was sitting in a seat with three guys I'd never seen before. All of us were dressed in olive drab army uniforms, the best New Cumberland Army Barracks could issue. The smell of camphor was so strong it covered the odor of the burnt coal coming from the locomotive.

Green mountains of Pennsylvania and West Virginia passed by the window; the plains of Kansas came into view. Days and nights slipped away..."Further and Further" the wheels clacked. The other guys and I got to know each other. We were just a bunch of scared kids.

My first view of my new home was Belen, New Mexico, where a sign pointed to Billy the Kid's cave. A long ride by truck through the desert night brought us to CCC Company 2358, Camp F2N, in Jemez Canyon. We were cold, hungry, and tired. Thick bologna sandwiches and coffee the cooks prepared went good. All hands slept well that night.

Days passed and we fell into a daily routine building a bridge over the Jemez River which is still there. After a few weeks our company received orders to move to the southwest part of the state, to Apache Creek, near Reserve and Aragon, New Mexico. Bunks, pots, pans, tools were loaded with methodical care to ease unloading at our new home; trucks were washed, lubricated and checked, back to front. Along the way we crossed the Great Magdalena Plain, and I cannot begin to describe the vast expanse rolling on, mile after mile. The purple foothills got no closer. They seemed to roll away from us, hour after hour; I was in total awe of this great wonder. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a water tower was visible and on the distant horizon buildings became discernible. Our overnight stop was the Magdalena CCC Camp.

The next afternoon we arrived in Apache Creek. Routine was set up in short order and we went to work in the Gila National Wilderness area, which I must say is one of our great national treasures; majestic ponderosa pines which grow 200 feet straight up without a limb; cold, pure running streams. The silence is overwhelming, but the wind in the trees can be heard.

Thanksgiving came around, and we had turkey dinner that was second to none (except Mom's). Uppermost in our minds were thoughts of home, family, friends, and in many cases, the gal back home.

As Christmas drew near, again there were thoughts of home. Being so far away, letters and cards were especially important. A nice blue spruce tree about eight feet tall planted in the middle of our compound was decorated with lights, top to bottom.

Then it was Christmas Eve and small groups of guys sat around the pot belly stoves in the barracks, the usual 'bull sessions' going on. Guitars came out; harmonicas appeared. Next thing I knew, most of our company was outside around the Christmas tree; in the crisp, pure air of the New Mexico night, young voices rang out clearly. Unashamed tears rolled down cheeks on that silent, holy night.

At about 2300 hours (11 PM civilian time) Church Call sounded over the camp. As our camp bugler from Pittsburg sounded the notes clean and clear, the sound reverberated from the nearby mesas and canyons as if "phantom buglers" were relaying the call to the sky, trees and desert.

The stillness of the night was broken by the sound of truck engines coming to life. Trucks took the protestant boys into Reserve; Catholic boys (I was in this group) were taken to a small Spanish chapel in Aragon.

Men in the parish in Aragon had a huge bonfire of alligator juniper logs burning in the open ground between the church and the rectory. The fire leaping up the pyramid of logs cast a red glow. Men stood around the fire, talking Spanish and rolling cigarettes of brown wheat paper; women of the parish were selling apple pie and a cup of coffee for five cents.

As midnight approached, several nuns escorted school children to the church. The little girls were dressed in white communion dresses. As they reached a landing outside the church door, they stopped and began singing *Silencio Noche, Santo Noche*. When they finished, everyone applauded. Then one of our truck drivers named Frattini from Scranton, Pennsylvania, hopped on the tailgate of a truck and clapped his hands like a conductor tapping his baton. A sixth sense told us what to sing. If I live to be a thousand, I do not think I will hear *Silent Night, Holy Night* sung with such reverence and so much heart. I can still see Frattini weaving a magical spell with his hands; his black mustache and curly black hair shining in the fire light. His mouth formed the words, his hands directed our singing, now softly, now louder, now quietly. No sound other than the acapella male choir and the crackling and popping log fire was heard.

By this time the priest had heard us and had come out. He was proud of his "Si, Si, Si Boys." When we finished the carol, the applause was thunderous as people in the church, the rectory and nearby homes had heard our song. We became a part of the procession around the church, carrying the Infant to the crib. A guy named 'Whitey' and I served the Mass and said the Latin responses.

After Mass we returned to camp. As most guys thought of home, sleep was a fleeting thing and every once in awhile a sob was heard. Then it was quiet.

A bunch of boys went to sleep that night. A bunch of men awoke on Christmas Morning, 1938.

-----By J. T. (Jim) Duffy of Philadelphia, PA.

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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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