

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

June 2012

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-Jim Rau, phone contact: 817-367-3343, Second Vice president-Pat Mann, phone: [info later], 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, phone contact: 972-255-7237.

Monthly Meeting is held on the **second** Saturday of each month from 10:30 AM to 1PM at the North Side 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 & 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. 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 : None this month.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: Jack Bragg, June 20; Marjorie Taylor, June 20; and Tony Rodriguez, June 28.

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MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, ON SATURDAY, June 9, 2012. Weather: Partly Cloudy – Temp. 78° : Attendance: 9.

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Pixler at 11:00 AM, followed by a welcome to all attending. He shared short excerpts from "Coffee Time."

The pledges to our flags were led by Sgt.-at-Arms, Troy Jones.

President Pixler then reminded all present the purpose of the CCC Legacy. It was asked if all attending received their newsletter from April and May, 2012. All in attendance had received the newsletters. With that, the minutes from the April meeting, motion to accept, as written, made by Jim Rau, seconded by Ruby Pixler, motion passed.

Next the minutes from May, 2012, motion to accept, as written, made by Troy Jones, seconded by Tony Rodriguez, motion passed.

The financial report was tabled, until Secretary/Treasurer, Blanch Howerton made the necessary deposits to bring the account up to date, motion to table made by Ruby Pixler, seconded by Bill McKee, motion to table passed.

There were no anniversaries noted for the month of June. Three birthdays were noted. We sang "Happy Birthday" to Tony Rodriguez, 28 June.

There was no old business. Under new business, it was announced the chapter is looking for a replacement chair for the kitchen committee. Lillie Payne is unable to attend the meeting due to health reasons. As always Lillie is missed by those who attend. There were no volunteers for the position, however several of the members stated they would help, as they could with the meals.

As part of the photos taken program, President Mike Pixler and 1st Vice President Jim Rau presented the buffalo Boogie 2012, and the tour taken by the chapter at the Fort Worth Nature Center & Refuge. The photo presentation included the photos taken of the participants of the run/walk, in the morning, with the members of the chapter on tour in the afternoon. Thanks to chapter member, Suzanne Tuttle, for our guide on the tour. A fun time was had by all! Several members want another trip. More to follow. The Can was passed, followed by the drawing of the \$10 door prize. Troy Jones won the \$10 and gave it back to the chapter with the understanding it would go toward his dues for next year, which are due in October of each year. This is the reason for the increase to \$10.

Jim Rau, 1st Vice President, offered the blessing. Motion to adjourn made by Tony Rodriguez, 2nd by Troy Jones, motion carried. We adjourned at 12:19 PM.

A wonderful meal was enjoyed by the CCC Legacy Chapter 123 family.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Blanche Howerton, Sec./Treas.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The Subject for This Corner is: It's Only Once a Month.

If you were one of the nine members who attended the meeting this past Saturday; two items, first, thank you for being there. After all it's only once a month. Second, even though it has been said it's a sign of weakness, I apologize; for what? Perhaps some of the members present were offended when I went into a rant about the lack of attendance at the meeting. After all, it's only once a month.

Sometimes I forget that people do have a life outside the CCC Legacy Chapter 123. I'm not sure what that may be, but I was told they in fact do have one. Just kidding! As we work, play, and commute in our daily lives, whatever happens; happens. I personally am careful of what I do, not to injure myself. What if I can't make it to my mother's? What if I'm not able to call that ballgame? What if I'm not able to conduct the meeting? After all, it's only once a month, right? The answer which was so kindly shared with me is, it'll go on anyway. Get over it! OK, I'll work on it in the future.

Perhaps I'll get over it; maybe not. We'll see. I still have a problem with officers not being at a meeting, but I'm working on it. I understand previous engagements, even though I feel it should be made around a chapter meeting. After all, it's only once a month. I do understand health problems. Don't like them, but I do

understand them. As we all are maturing with age, we just have to be a bit more careful. We don't move as fast as we used to; our sight is going; and let's not get into our personal lives. The point being we need to take better care of ourselves. After all, we have a meeting to attend, once a month. For some of us, it's about the only time we leave the house; except for doctor's appointments, or to go to the store. Let's not take that away from ourselves. After all, it's only once a month.

Next once a month is the 14th of July, 2012. Hope to see you all there. Until we meet again, be safe and take care.

Mike Pixler, President, CCC Legacy Chapter 123

Chapter Eternal

As many of you know by now, we have lost one of our dearest members, and one who was in many ways, the backbone of CCC Legacy Chapter 123 for many years, namely Curtis O. Greer, Jr. Curtis died on Saturday, June 16, 2012, with his wife, LaVaughn and their family by his side. He was born on October 13, 1923, in Fort Worth, Texas. He joined the CCC in 1939 at age 16, his mother having signed the papers saying that he was 17. It was a sign of the times. He served in a Soil Conservation Camp at Waxahachie, Texas, along with two current members of our chapter, Richard Crooks and Bill McKee, until 1940, at which time he joined the U.S. Army. In World War II he served as a medic earning the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart. He retired from the Army as a Captain in 1961. Curtis and LaVaughn married in 1943; a marriage that lasted for 68 years. Curtis was Secretary/Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, and Historian for our Chapter 123. He wore a lot of hats, and wore them well. Dennis Greer, son of Curtis and LaVaughn, and several of their grand-children, gave moving tributes and memories of Curtis at their church funeral service. This was followed by a long processional to the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery where Curtis was honored with a full military burial service.

Our friend, fellow member, and CCC Historian for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Janelle Taylor, passed along the following written remembrances by Curtis for the TPWD:

CCC Reflections – by Curtis O. Greer, Jr.

~~“In the spring of 1939 our family had some real financial needs. I don't know how she did it, for I was under age, but my mother got a quota for me to go into the CCC. I left Fort Worth with several other fellows on the train and we were sent to Cleburne [Texas] for processing. This was an all day deal [today I can drive it in about 45 minutes]. They were building the state park there and were working on the dam which would contain the lake. They had the large 40 man barracks and a wonderful mess hall. I had never tasted food as good. The minimum weight was 100 pounds and I checked in at 109, so they sent me to the mess hall to eat a pound of food [mostly bananas] so I could meet the requirements. Today I tell people that was 57 years and over 100 pounds ago! We didn't stay in Cleburne long. They sent us to the Soil Conservation Camp at Waxahachie.~~

After work hours we reverted to Army control. Our Commanding Officer was Captain Robert Evans. He was short of stature, but long on Military discipline. He was strict but fair. I was impressed with the Reveille and Retreat Formations. We ate family style. Everyone entered and sat down, then the signal was given to start eating. We had platters and bowls of food at each table. Table waiters would refill them as necessary. I learned very quickly that ‘SHORT-STOPPING’ was a real No-No, especially if committed by a ‘ROOKIE.’ If someone at the far end of the table asked that an item be passed, it went directly to him. You didn't stop it in between and

put some on your plate. We all took our turns serving as kitchen police [KP] and table waiters. This was done by roster.

We were only a mile from town, so we didn't have a Doctor. We did have a dispensary and a Medical Technician. About every 6 months, a traveling Dentist would come through and everyone sweated out his dental survey and hoped no cavities were present. He had an assistant with him whose job was to pump a pedal which turned the drill bit. You can imagine how slow the RPM was. We didn't get deadening shots either! I still get the HE-BE-GEE-BEES when I remember those dental visits.

I had the usual 'ROOKIE' tricks and jokes pulled on me, such as asking at each barracks for the key to the playground and searching under the seats of the trucks in the motor pool for the double-clutch. Later I would enjoy pulling this stuff on newly arriving enrollees.

Today the name 'CHICKEN' means you are a coward, but in those days, any very young, inexperienced fellow was called 'CHICKEN.' I carried that name for years and thought I would never get rid of it.

An enrollee was paid \$30 a month. He kept \$8 and \$22 was sent home to his family. After my 18 months of duty, I transferred to the Army and took a pay cut to \$21 a month. I still sent \$10 a month home. An Assistant Leader made \$36 a month and a Leader earned \$45. My leader was Charlie Brock. He was like a father to me. I worked hard for him. He was like Captain Evans, STRICT but FAIR.

We were working one cold winter day near Ennis, Texas. A turning plow had prepared the soil and we lined up on our knees and would shake the dirt from the grass. It would be placed in piles and later loaded on trucks, taken to Camp and wet down. The next day it would be planted in terraces which had been constructed in other locations in the County to fight soil erosion. A Texas blue norther had blown in and it was COLD, COLD. About 10 AM seven guys stood up and said they wanted to be taken back to Camp. They couldn't work any longer in that cold. Charlie obliged them. When we returned to Camp that afternoon, they were gone, along with their DISHONORABLE DISCHARGES rendered by Captain Evans. There was no long drawn out trial or defense, no review of workers' rights, no postponement, no suspended sentence, no excuses. The facts were they had violated the terms of their contract by refusing to work. Now, there were seven quotas available which were immediately filled. I've thought about that experience a lot and I'm proud that I stuck it out and did my job, although I was only 16 years old. They were grown men and didn't stick it out. I think I became a man that day.

CCC CAMP LIFE REFLECTIONS

One of our first duties when we arose in the morning was to beat the dust out of our GI [Government Issue] blanket - although there really wasn't any dust. We used this instrument with heavy wires attached to it and a handle to hold it by. Something like a heart-shaped tennis racket. This would make a loud popping sound when we hit the stretched blanket with it. With about 200 boys doing this all at once, it sounded like machine gun fire. Years later I talked to some people who lived near the camp and they remembered the popping noises coming from the camp. In fact, they could set their watches by it. You could always tell a 'rookies' blanket because it still had the fuzz on it, but a veterans' blanket was thread bare from the many beatings and the US that was stenciled on it was hardly legible.

A lot of emphasis was placed on making up your bed properly. The blanket had to be stretched so tight that, if the Inspector tossed a coin on it, it would bounce right back up. The US had to be in just the right place and the 'white collar' of the top sheet lined up with that of everyone else's sheet. I think the inspections in the CCCs

were probably more thorough than the ones I experienced late in my Army career. [Don't tell my ex-First Sergeant that!]"

CCC ON THE JOB REFLECTIONS

We rode to and from work each day on these green colored trucks. As best I can remember, they were Internationals, GMCs, or Chevrolets. Being a truck driver was one of the best jobs at camp. We referred to the trucks as 'State trucks,' although I'm sure they belonged to the Soil Conservation Service for we were a SCS camp. They had stake beds with high sideboards and wooden benches across the center to sit on. A large wooden tool box was located up front with an enrollee positioned on the tool box as a look-out. In case of a low hanging tree or some other obstruction, he would shout a warning to 'duck' or holler 'tree limb' or whatever.

Also, no one smoked 'ready rolled' cigarettes on the job. Even at a dime a pack they were still too expensive, so everyone who smoked [unfortunately most of them did smoke] rolled their own with Golden Grain, Duke's Mixture, or Bull Durham. 'Ready Rolls' were saved for Saturday night and 'doing the town' or going to the picture show. Anyhow, when the truck was moving along at a good clip, especially if the wind was blowing, it was the guard's job to shout 'Durham in the air!', when someone started to roll one up. If the tobacco got into your eyes, it would burn like fire! So, everyone closed their eyes until after the crisis passed. When we returned from a hot summer day's work in the field and the blue denims were streaked with white, we knew we had a salt loss and had to take salt tablets. Just think, the CCC boys made 'Blue denims' popular. Of course, the loose fitting shirts and pants we wore couldn't compare with today's designer jeans. Wonder why the floppy hat we wore never became popular?

CCC WORK DAY REFLECTIONS

During the noon lunch break, I had 'horse-played' with my buddy. I noticed the Soil Conservation Service foreman give me the eye every now and then. After chow, we went back to our duties of constructing the six strand barb wire fence. The assistant Leader immediately assigned me to dig a corner post hole. I was digging away and feeling sorry for myself and said out loud, [but to no one in particular], "Old Burr Head is responsible for me getting this corner-hole assignment." I was in a bent-over position with the post hole diggers in hand, much like the center on a football team just prior to the snap. Between my legs and directly behind me, in the quarterback position, I saw a pair of pants legs. They were of the light green color of the Soil Conservation Service uniform. I immediately realized it was old 'Burr Head' himself! I just kept working and hoped for the best. Finally, he disappeared. Nothing ever came of it. I think he felt sorry for me or was afraid he couldn't keep a straight face if he confronted me.

CCC REFLECTIONS: AFTER WORK, WEEK ENDS, AND EVENINGS

This was the fun time. We worked Monday through Friday and, if you passed the Saturday morning inspection, you had the week end off. We were stationed only one mile from the town of Waxahachie and we could walk that easy. Enrollees weren't allowed to have cars, but of course, some of the fellow did have cars and kept them stashed at nearby farm houses. It was a real treat if one of these guys invited you to take a ride to a nearby town, Hillsboro, Ennis, or even Big 'D' [Dallas].

There was a dance hall at Waxahachie and, although I couldn't dance [and I never learned], some of us would always go to watch and listen to the juke box. This is where I learned all about the music of Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys and Ernest Tubb. Also, there was a textile mill in town and the girls from that area were always

having some kind of party for the CCC boys. [Tree Monkeys] Some of them had brothers or other kin folks in the camp.

You could go to the movies for a dime, [if you bought your ticket at the canteen at the ~~Camp's Recreation Room~~], and a hamburger and a coke were a nickel each. It was a real treat to go to the midnight show. Saturday night ~~was the only night of the week that we didn't~~ have bed check at camp, so ~~we didn't have to worry about being~~ late for that.

All of the farmers [and their daughters] would come to town on Saturday to do their shopping and visiting. The fall time was the best time of the year, because everyone had extra money from picking cotton. [In 1939 a pcker was paid 65 cents for 100 pounds of cotton]. You and your girl friend would just walk around the Courthouse Square with nothing to do. If you got tired, you just sat down in someone's car and rested. Everyone left their cars unlocked in those days [can you imagine that?] If they returned and you were in their car they didn't seem to mind.

On some weekends my friend and I would hitch-hike to nearby towns just for the heck of it. This was a lot of fun. ~~One time we couldn't catch a ride, and we had to walk 15 miles back to camp.~~

We had a company ball team and we often played in town. Trinity University was small then and located in Waxahachie. [Today it is a large University located in San Antonio]. If we beat them, our season was complete and successful. I was a substitute, however I did get to play one night. Although I struck out both times I came to bat, I felt good for I had played in ~~my very first night game~~. ~~By today's standards the lights were terrible.~~

We had several educational programs and our advisor was a Mr. Knight. I was interested in typing and I took this course. This helped me in later years to get a good job during my Army career. The classes were held on weekday nights. We used an old Underwood typewriter with covered keyboard. The keyboard chart was placed on the wall at eye level and you practiced in this manner.

The CCC Camp at Waxahachie was a Soil Conservation Service Unit and it was built on private property. Our barracks were the small type, [six man, I believe] and were covered with tar paper. A pot-bellied stove dominated the center of the room. The camp has long since been torn down and a beautiful Interstate Highway runs almost where it once stood. I still drive down there every now and then with my wife and children and grandchildren [or anyone else who will listen] and do a bit of reminiscing." *[To Be Continued.]*

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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