

CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123 NEWSLETTER

3412 Pleasant Run Road, Irving, Texas 75062

September 2013

**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- Larka Tetens, [info later], Sergeant at Arms-Troy Jones, Chaplain-Rev. James Pixler, Kitchen Committee, [Open], 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:** Richard & Jerriene Crooks, Sept. 23.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY:** LaDonna Perkins, Sept. 14; Marcia Doherty, Sept. 19; Richard Crooks, Sept. 21...No... 92!  
Dee King, Sept.25; Betty Fruge, Sept. 28; and Larkin Dilbeck, Sept. 29.....No. 95!

MINUTES OF MEETING OF CCC LEGACY CHAPTER 123, ON SATURDAY, September 14, 2013. Weather: Clear, Temp. A warm 94, Attendance: 13.

The meeting was gavelled to order at 11:00 AM [+/-] by CCC Boy, Larkin Dilbeck. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Jim Rau acting in place of President Mike Pixler, welcomed all to the meeting of CCC Legacy Chapter 123 and reminded those in attendance of the purpose of the CCC Legacy. Pres. Pixler had traveled to Virginia to represent Chapter 123 in the dedication of the CCC Legacy Plaque Wall honoring "Boys" of the CCC who served in the period of 1933-1942. We look forward to his report of the ceremony.

The Invocation was offered by V.P. Jim Rau.

The pledges to our flags were led by Sgt.-at-Arms Troy Jones. A motion to accept the minutes as written in the August, 2013, newsletter was made by Tony Rodriguez and seconded by Troy Jones. Motion passed. A copy of

the financial report was at each table, and a motion to accept the statement as written was made by Steve Porter, and seconded by Tony Rodriguez. Motion carried.

Jim then welcomed visits by members Herman Elliott, daughter Herma Loy Smith, and granddaughter Lisa Smith; as well as member Kirk Urice. Herman, a bona-fide CCC Boy, and daughter Herma Loy traveled all the way from Brenham, Texas, as well as Lisa from Dallas. We were very glad to have them with us this day. We were glad to have Kirk with us because he has to work often on Saturdays. Kirk also saved the day for us because when he arrived, we had just discovered that we were without coffee and doughnuts, he turned around and made an emergency run to get them for us. Thanks Kirk! More about these folks momentarily.

V.P. Rau reminded all that chapter dues run through 31 October, 2013, so please get those dues in by our next meeting, 12 October, 2013, check, money order or cash; after all it is only \$10..."Such a Deal!"

Jim reminded members that an election of officers is due this October also. The offices of First Vice President and Secretary/Treasurer are due to be voted on at our next meeting.

Jim told of calling Bill McKee in Abilene to check on him and ask about the time he entered the State Fair of Texas Hog Competition and his hog won as the Grand Champion. At that time he had signed up for the CCC at Waxahachie, Texas, but the camp superintendent allowed him to delay joining so he could enter. Bill also told of exhibiting at the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show at another time. Bill knew his hog had a chance, but he also knew that his friends, the Johnson brothers, had the best hog that could win. He also knew that because the Johnson boys were black, they did not have a chance of winning, so he offered to take their hog and enter for them under his name. They did and their hog won. When the local newspaper reporter interviewed Bill, he told the reporter that the Johnson brothers had actually raised the hog and should be given credit. The reporter turned and walked off at that.

Jim then told of calling Helene Hubbard to ask about her and how Ernest was doing in his rehab hospital. Helene told him Ernest was holding his own and was actually somewhat stronger, but still does not want to have visitors. Due to Jim's calling at the same time that Ernest was calling Helene, Jim got to talk with Ernest for a few minutes due to the phone connection.

We recently talked with Betty Gebhard, member from Grandview, Texas, who advised that husband and member Norbert, a CCC Boy and veteran of the famous Ploisti Oil Field Raid of WW II, has taken a turn for the worse and is now in a nursing facility there. Our thoughts and prayers go out to them both.

Jim then turned to Tony Rodriguez who had missed the last two meetings to ask him to explain himself. Tony explained that he had been at a bowling tournament as a long time member of a bowling team called the "The Buzzards." One of the times as the team was bowling someone asked, "Since three strikes were called a "Turkey" what should you call three spares in a row?" It was decided it should be called a "Buzzard," so they picked that as their team name. Tony said he missed the other meeting due to going to his family reunion in San Antonio. He is part of a large family and they honored him at that occasion due to him being the last of his generation of twelve kids. Two of his older brothers had been in the CCC. It came up that Tony had made the military his career, both in the Army and twenty-five years in the U.S. Air Force; a good bit of that time in Air Force Intelligence. When asked what kind of work he did as such, the only thing he said was, "My name is Tony." It was decided not to pursue it further!

We were honored to have two CCC “Boys” with us this day; namely Larkin Dilbeck and a special appearance by member, Herman Elliott, formerly of New Mexico, now living in Brenham, Texas. Larkin told of having just recently attended the annual reunion of his World War II group, the 740<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge in Europe. They meet every year at a hotel in Grapevine, Texas, because most of the original members were from Oklahoma or Texas. There were eleven veterans present, the youngest being 88 years young. Larkin was the oldest, coming up on his 95th year shortly. A good number of family members were there in support.

Herman came with his daughter, Herma Loy Smith. In talking with her, we found that she is a former Miss New Mexico, and for a time after getting out of college, she sang with Fred Waring & His Pennsylvanians Orchestra! You never know who is going to show up at our little meetings. Herman spent three years in the CCC; among other jobs he said they planted a lot trees, and he became a truck driver. He was made a leader. Herman said that when you become a leader, it can be lonely because you cannot be close friends with any men you are supervising. One thing that Herman remembers about his time in the CCC was that for a brief time they had a new education instructor assigned to their unit. For some reason he soon left. The instructor’s name: Richard Nixon. Herman still feels that the CCC and President Roosevelt did great things for this country.

There was a mini-college reunion of sorts as a result of all of this. When Herma Loy mentioned that she had attended Eastern New Mexico University at Portales, NM, Larkin said that he had also gone to that school in 1942 before he was drafted; then called Eastern New Mexico State Teachers College. Whereupon Tony Rodriguez told that his niece had attended there also.

Kirk Urice told us a very interesting story involving his grandfather and the famous flyer Wiley Post, who was killed along with Will Rogers in a plane crash in Alaska in the 1930s. Kirk’s grandfather was a successful oil wild-catter and businessman in the oil boom days of the ‘20’s in East and Central Texas. Wiley Post worked for him in the oil fields as a roughneck, and had lost an eye in an accident there. Wiley took up flying after that and became a pilot flying Kirk’s grandfather where ever he needed to go.

Tony Rodriguez won the \$10 door prize and immediately returned it to the kitty. A number of attendees won a door prize, including Larka, Larkin, Ruby, Kirk, Herman, Herma Loy, Lisa, Troy, and Bill.

V.P. Jim Rau offered the blessing, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and was passed at about 12:15 PM. Good food and good fellowship was enjoyed by all.

Respectfully submitted for,

Chapter Secretary/Treasurer, Larka Tetens

Jim Rau, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

CCC Legacy Chapter 123

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We recently came across this short list of words or phrases used by Boys of the CCC; some have definitions, some do not. If you know what is meant, drop us a line. Also we realize there may be many more words, or etc.; so let us know if you remember any of them and we will pass them along.

CANTHOOK

CCC CHAIN SAW

DOG ROBBER – OFFICER’S ORDERLY

DUBBIN’ – INITIATION OF CAMP NEWBE

G.I. BATH

GOLD BRICK / GOLD BRICKER – LAY-ABOUT OR SHIRKER

G.P.L.D. – GOVT. PROPERTY, LOST OR STOLEN

GUT HAMMER – IRON TRIANGLE SUMMON FOR MEALS

K. P. – KITCHEN PATROL

MISERY SAWS

OVER THE HILL – AWOL

PEAVIE

POWDER MONKEY – DYNAMITE MAN

PUNK – NEW ENROLLEE

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### **A TALK WITH HERMAN ELLIOTT, A CCC BOY FORMERLY OF NEW MEXICO, NOW OF BRENHAM, TEXAS**

After Herman’s and his family’s visit with us at our recent meeting, we decided we needed to talk with him and get more of his story. We gave him a call, and he reported that he has been a little under the weather but seemed more than glad to talk with us. He told us that he was born in Oklahoma, and that his father was a share cropper. That is, they lived on someone else’s land and in turn gave the owner a share of whatever crop they grew – in the South this nearly always meant cotton.

In 1927 they were living in Louisiana when their world, and nearly everyone else’s in the region, was turned upside down by the Great Mississippi Flood of 1927. It was, and still is, the greatest flood that the United States has ever known. Beginning in 1926 and especially the spring and summer of 1927, very heavy rains in the Central U.S. sent massive amounts of water down its’ tributaries causing the Mississippi River to overtop and break the levee system in 145 places, flooding a 50 mile wide area for nearly 100 miles. *[This from Wikipedia]*

Herman’s family’s single story house was destroyed and they took refuge in the two-story house of their landlord that they had abandoned. They were trapped in the upper level when his father began pulling boards off the walls to construct a boat. They managed to fashion one together enough to allow them to escape. Herman’s uncle, his father’s brother who was a World War I veteran with a \$50 a month disability pension, came to their

rescue. He had a real boat and took them to the only dry ground in the whole area; namely the great Mississippi Levee. There were thousands of people stranded and living on the levees for weeks on end.

When the waters finally receded enough for them to leave, the family took a train to Clarksville, Texas. After they got established, Herman's mother found work at a sewing factory there in Clarksville. In this way she helped support the family. The Depression hit the family hard like it did most of the people they knew. Herman was out of school and looking for any kind of work that he could to help the family. Very little was available. At her work his mother heard about the CCC and told Herman about it. When they found that he was supposed to be age 17 to join, she lied about his age on the application and Herman was accepted.

He was immediately put on a train at Clarksville with other enrollees, and after five days and nights, were let off in Lordsburg, New Mexico. There waiting for them were three CCC trucks which took the new enrollees 35 miles north of Lordsburg to Red Rocks, New Mexico, to a Soil Conservation Service camp, SCS-2, Co. No. 843. Herman was assigned to a "fly camp,"[a temporary outlying camp] and put to work building "jetties" of stone or concrete to control soil erosion. This term is normally associated with controlling beach erosion, but the principle worked the same in fields or roads to control blowing sand and rain. After only three months during which he became a truck driver, the camp superintendent made Herman a leader. The commander told him that by becoming a leader, he would no longer be able to have close friends among his co-workers. It was something he would have to get used to. But after only six months, he was made the supply sergeant.

Sometime after, Herman was transferred to Velarde, New Mexico, near Espanola, which is north of Santa Fe. This was a Soil Conservation camp also. Soon after his arrival, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant left the CCC, and because of his experience, Herman got that job. With this he was now making \$20 a month to keep and his family at home received \$50, a real boost. He was also making 25 cents each cutting hair on the side plus a few extra bucks from odd extra jobs. With this he bought a car which he managed to hide outside their camp. Later Herman was again transferred, this time to La Jara, Colorado, which was south of Alamosa in the vast San Luis Valley between two mountain ranges. Winters could be pretty brutal here. Herman and a helper were bringing supplies in a truck back to camp from Alamosa, and they got caught in a big snow storm. The snow piled up so much that the truck was stuck right in the middle of the road. They were freezing and had had nothing to eat for some time, when they saw the lights of something coming toward them. It proved to be a caterpillar tractor driven by their lieutenant from camp to rescue them. Herman was the supply sergeant here, and when the company 1<sup>st</sup> sergeant resigned to go into the Army, he was asked to take over. At this time a number of the more capable CCC guys were leaving to go into the service, and Herman was getting increasingly fed up with the way the camp was being run; with just 13 days left in his enrollment, he got so disgusted that he just quit and drove to his family's home, now in Chickasha, Oklahoma. As a result he was given a dishonorable discharge. Herman said this apparently carried no weight with the U.S. Army, because when he got his draft notice, the Army gladly took him in.

*We hope to continue our conversation with Herman about his time after the CCC. The day after we talked, we learned from his granddaughter that Herman had a bad fall and may have broken or dislocated his shoulder. We will keep him in our prayers and check back on him.*

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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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