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'CCC Boy' recalls Depression-era program

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Dallas resident Andrew Gorto is a former "CCC boy" and proud of it.

Now he wants to make sure that others know the true story of the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), dubbed "Roosevelt's Tree Army" for their extensive work in state parks and with the National Forest Service.

This year the CCC is observing the 60th anniversary of its founding, with many CCC reunions being held across the country.

"Some people still think that the CCC was a camp for juvenile delinquents," Gorto said. "They don't know what it really was."

It was a program which put young men to work building roads, fences, phone lines, small reservoirs, airstrips and bridges. CCC boys - and some girls - made maps, did surveys, fought forest fires and worked in emergency

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Andrew Gorto
CCC veteran

services - anything that the government needed.

In a time when many men of all ages were unemployed, the CCC gave young men on-the-job training in trades. They could even learn to read and write.

Gorto signed up with about 30,000 other boys in 1937 in Newark, NJ, where he grew up, and was sent to Fort Dix, NJ, for processing.

He worked on projects in Murray, Utah, and Morristown, NJ, where he helped to restore several historic sites dating from the American Revolution.

"The Army was in charge of organizing us, but we had no military training," Gorto recalled. "There were no guns. Our weapons were our picks and shovels. The only marching that we did was to dinner every day."

Upon arrival at Fort Dix, each boy underwent a physical examination; those who passed were issued two complete changes of clothing and two pairs of shoes.

"In those days, when you felt lucky to have your brother's hand-me-down shoes, I felt like I had hit the jackpot when I got my clothes," he said.

In the CCC camps, the boys worked five days a week for room and board, health care, clothing and \$30 a month, \$25 of which was sent home. They could purchase up to three canteen coupon books a month, which came out of their \$5 allowance.

"Back then, a haircut was 25¢ and laundry service was 50¢. You might only have a quarter left over at the end of the month, but you felt good anyway," Gorto said. "We worked hard and were glad to do it."

A typical day in a CCC camp began with 6 a.m. reveille. The boys washed up, got dressed, made their bunks and tidied the barracks and were at breakfast by 7 a.m.

They travelled by truck to their work sites, where they put in an eight-hour day of physical labor. At the end of the work day, the boys were trucked back down to

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SIGNING IN - Andrew Gorto shows Park Superintendent Diane Lynn at the Tempe Wicke House Revolutionary War historic site near Morristown, NJ, which he helped restore with the CCC, his commemorative book. "It's a proud moment to remember those who made the Wicke House a reality," Lynn wrote.



The family Goose

A gaggle of geese spotted along Upper Demumds Road in Dallas Township included new and old family members. The mature

goose in the right foreground wears a tag around its neck, as do many geese that tend to stay in the area year-round.

POST PHOTO/GRACE R. DOVE

Some high-risk inmates leaving Chase Prison

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Changes in the state prison system and more funding will mean fewer high-risk inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas (SCID). But officials who announced the new plan said nothing about relieving overcrowding at the prison, which is home to 2,120 inmates but was designed to hold less than 1,500.

A 20 percent increase in the state's budget for the Department of Corrections, swelling it to nearly \$100 million, plus the construction of several new prisons, is

expected to directly affect the mix of the prison's population, 77 percent of which is presently composed of inmates requiring medium-level security.

"Only about 25 percent of SCID's inmates require close supervision," Deputy Secretary Raymond Clymer said.

Under the new plan, Dallas will be classified as a third-class facility, which means that it will house mostly medium-security inmates.

The new plan will shift many maximum and high security inmates from Dallas to newer

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Dallas teachers allowed to retire after leaves

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

At a special meeting Thursday, June 24, the Dallas School Board voted to waive a requirement that four teachers, currently out on sabbatical leave for health reasons, must return to work for a year before they retire.

Mrs. Janice Borton, Mrs. Nancy Goeringer, Mrs. Patricia Kirk and Mrs. Jane Walzak are among a group of 10 teachers whose letters of intent to retire have been accepted by the school board.

John Baur, Mary Ann Sigworth, Edward Augustine, Marlene Holly and Marilyn O'Connell also wish to retire, but currently aren't out on sabbatical leave.

Although these teachers qualify for an early retirement benefit, the district has appealed an arbitrator's decision on how much money each teacher will receive to the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas.

"The board wasn't happy with the arbitrator's decision," superintendent Gerald Wycallis said.

Wycallis said that paying the early retirement benefit recommended by the arbitrator would cost the district approximately \$330,000.

He refused to disclose how much money each individual teacher would receive, since the early retirement benefit is based

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Lehman budget spares Luzerne Cty. taxpayers

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Lake-Lehman School District's recently approved \$15,008,276 budget was a relief for its homeowners in Luzerne County, who didn't have a millage increase this year, as they had previously expected.

But it's a different story in Noxen, the district's northernmost community, in Wyoming County, where residents were slapped with a four-mill increase.

The district's millage rate for its five Luzerne County communities (Jackson, Lake, Ross and Lehman Townships and Harveys Lake) has been 185 mills for the

past two years, while its millage rate for Wyoming County (Noxen) is now 85 mills with the new increase.

Although there were no changes in the overall budget, fluctuations in the market values of property in Luzerne and Wyoming County over the past year accounted for the last-minute difference, according to Lake-Lehman's business manager Ray Bowersox.

"Since the state doesn't release the market value figures until early June, we don't know what we actually have to work with when we draft the preliminary budget in May," he said. "The real estate line is the budget's final line. Once

the final figures come in, sometimes we have to make adjustments."

Bowersox said that a district's total market values can be affected by rising property values or people making improvements to their homes, which ultimately show up on the tax rolls.

Bowersox said that the millage is adjusted each year according to the district's total market value, a figure computed by each county from the prices of properties sold and their assessed value for tax purposes.

"Since each county taxes at a different rate, the state must average, or equalize, the millage figures, so that you get an accu-

rate comparison," Bowersox said.

Last year three percent of the district's market value was in Wyoming County, while 97 percent was in Luzerne County.

This year, Wyoming County accounted for 3.3 percent of the district's market value, while Luzerne County's share was 96.7 percent. The 0.3 percent increase in Wyoming County's share of the district's market value accounted for its four-mill tax increase, Bowersox said.

According to the preliminary budget, the district anticipates income from local tax sources to be \$7,337,400 this year.

Kingston Twp. park fixed after vandals do damage

By GRACE R. DOVE
Post Staff

Kingston Township police are investigating several acts of vandalism which caused \$2,000 in damage to the township's recreation park on Center Street.

According to police chief James

Balavage, within the past two weeks, someone broke into the restroom area by kicking the doors in. Once inside, the vandals spread toilet paper around and did more damage inside. Because of the strength needed to kick the doors in, he suspects the perpetrators to be teenagers.

Balavage said that police are

making extra patrols in the area and will prosecute anyone whom they catch to the fullest extent of the law. Charges will include criminal mischief, Balavage said.

Township manager Jeff Box said that all the damage has been repaired and that all of the facilities are now ready for use.

Box has requested that anyone

who sees anything out of the ordinary at the township park call police immediately.

"There is absolutely no reason for someone to do this," Balavage said. "The recreation park is used by residents for enjoyment and exercise and the young people's Back Mountain baseball and soccer programs.

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