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"Building Communitative Bridges
In A Tri-Racial Setting"

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SOLUTION TO LUMBERTON SCHOOL MESS NEARS

A News Analysis
by Bruce Barton

In spite of vociferous and, sometimes, unbelievable knee-jerk reactions from many of the affected residents, the N.C. General Assembly is finishing up legislation this week in the Senate that will de-annex the Clyburn Pines-Country Club area from the Lumberton City School District and return it to the Robeson County School District from which it was unlawfully taken more than a decade ago.

The legislation was endorsed by all of the local legislators, and sponsored by Rep. Horace Locklear, the Indian Representative, in an effort to resolve the long-standing controversy concerning the illegal annexation of areas outside Lumberton proper which occurred in the late '60s and early '70s. The renegade annexations occurred at the height of the desegregation pressure by federal authorities, and many believe that they were engineered so as to allow the predominately white residents to avoid sending their children to the predominately Indian county schools.

The illegal annexations were brought to federal attention by Dexter Brooks during the summer of 1974 while he was a law student intern with the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice. The U.S. Attorney General then formally objected to the annexations under the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 in early 1975, though no enforcement action was forthcoming by the federal authorities.

The *Carolina Indian Voice* heralded the news, of course, but the matter lay dormant until 1981 when the issue was revived by the North Robeson Concerned Parents-the organization opposed the annexations as they felt that students were being bussed out of their area who could be utilized to support a more comprehensive school in the north. The group contrasted curriculum poor Magnolia with Lumberton Senior High.

The organization solicited and received the assistance of Lumbee River Legal Services and the American Civil Liberties Union in bringing litigation attacking the annexations. Although a strange decision was rendered by the local federal court, consisting of a three-judge panel, including Robeson native Earl Britt, the plaintiffs prevailed in their direct appeal to the United States Supreme Court. Thus, the residents of the annexed areas may no longer serve on the Lumberton School Board or vote in any election for its members. The North Carolina Attor-

ney General subsequently ruled that the county may no longer levy the supplemental school tax upon property within the annexed areas, thus, putting a severe financial strain on the city schools.

Lumberton first tried to resolve the matter politically with the Federal Attorney General utilizing the services of W. Osborne Lee, Jr., a bombastic, local attorney who ironically represented the residents of these areas when they petitioned for inclusion into the city school district. Although Attorney Lee struggled mightily and stalked the corridors of power in the nation's capitol with various politicians, such as Ed Johnson and Tom Gibson, the federal authorities declined the invitation offered them by the local federal court to rescind their earlier objection. From what we have been able to gather, the plaintiffs and their legal representatives seemingly over-whelmed "Obbie" Lee and his political allies with masses of data and cogent argument.

Having paid Mr. Lee a small fortune to save the day and seeing him seemingly fail so miserably and ungraciously, the Lumberton school authorities accepted the suggestion of Senator Sam Noble and others to sit down and talk about resolving what had become a nightmare. From what we have been able to gather, a series of private meetings were held involving the plaintiffs and representatives of the Lumberton and county boards of education. The county schools were represented by Supt. Purnell Swett, Chairman David Green, and interestingly enough, Dexter Brooks, who was responsible for first exposing the annexations and who now serves as attorney for the county school board. The Lumberton Schools were represented by Supt. Gilbert Carroll, Chairman Al Kahn and regularly-retained counsel John Wishart Campbell. Noticeably absent from the discussions was the apparently now discredited "Obbie" Lee.

At first many suggested that Lumberton attempt to solve its problem by annexing even more county territory. Even Rep. David Parnell pledged his support to such legislation; however, Senator Sam Noble refused to go along saying that the matter should be resolved through negotiation among all concerned parties.

The county school board also served notice that it would strongly oppose any further annexation of its territory. The threat was given even greater substance by the presence of Dexter Brooks whose legal talent and knowledge of voting law makes him a formidable adversary.

Interestingly enough, Brooks is also the founding father and chairman of the Board of Lumbee River Legal Services and a member of the Civil Liberties Union.

As we understand it, once the various personalities understood the positions of the other parties, an amicable solution was reached. The plaintiffs agreed to not press any further litigation if the Clyburn Pines-Country Club area was de-annexed from the Lumberton City School District. The city board of education agreed and, with the approval of the county school board, the compromise was submitted to the local legislators for the introduction of enabling legislation.

We salute Senator Noble who had the courage not to be swayed initially by the frenzied crowd and who insisted that the parties try to resolve the problem through negotiations rather than through biased, one-sided legislation. A press release from Senator Noble is printed in its entirety elsewhere in this issue. We are proud that Indian people are represented by such as Purnell Swett and Dexter Brooks who it seems can hold their own with the best of any race. Although Brooks has his detractors, they cannot validly criticize his abilities or the results of his activities.

We are even proud of the Lumberton school authorities who apparently negotiated the issue in good faith.

It seems that Robeson is a better place for the experience. It demonstrates that redskins and palefaces can sit down and reason together. If we will now only apply this method to other problems, such as the building of North Robeson High School and the elimination of these smaller city school units, some real progress will finally be realized for all of us.

A NOTE ABOUT THOSE WHO OPPOSE

The citizens residing in the affected area have been in the public eye the last few days as the matter has moved through the halls of the general assembly in Raleigh.

Serving as spokesman, mostly, has been Eric Prevatte. Ironically, Prevatte has a business-Prevatte's Auto Parts-in Pembroke. Pembroke is considered by many as the economic and spiritual center of the Indian populace in Robeson County, the dominate race in the county schools.

The irony is, as one Indian political wag put it, "It's o.k. to sell Indians spark plugs, as long as one doesn't have to go to school with them."

ordinator, discussed THE SEASON '82-83 attractions and The Red Balloon Children's Series. This year the Center had added a Theatre Series to its program, Mr. Enoch Morris, who is also coordinator of Dramatic Activities, discussed the plays in this series.

The line up includes John Bay as Groucho Marx in "An Elephant in My Pajamas" appearing Sept. 30; Susannah McCortle singing tunes from "The Hollywood Blondes" on November 9; the Washington Ball on March 14, and on April 21, 1983 the famous actor Vincent Price.

The Red Balloon Children's Series has proven to be very successful this year. Thanks to McDonald's of Lumberton who have agreed to underwrite this series again this year. The 1982-83 Red Balloon Series is made up of four professional attractions. The first is Lenny and La Bananas, Saturday, September 18, 1982 at 2 p.m. . . a clown act is designed for children of all ages. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" will be presented on Saturday, November 20, 1982, at 7 p.m. Your child will thrill to the giant puppets and enjoy the moral story it conveys. On Saturday, Jan. 8, 1983 Maggie Red, 13-year-old jazz singer and piano player,

There were several new projects discussed for THE SEASON '82-83 program. Mr. Enoch Morris, Director of the Performing Arts Center, welcomed the group and gave an update on the '81-82 budget and attendance. Folicia W. Turner, Cultural Events Co-

ommunities. The Performing Arts Center Angels met recently to discuss and make plans for THE SEASON '82-83 series. The Angels of the Performing Arts Center are a prestigious volunteer group of ladies who support the cultural programs presented at PSU. These ladies donate their time and services to make an evening of professional entertainment more enjoyable to an audience. They've been known to sell tickets, prepare food for artists' receptions, host visiting artists, and they've helped publicize the various attractions by distributing posters and brochures to local

Angels of PSU's Performing Arts Center



Shown are some of PAC's Angels in a recent meeting.

The Performing Arts Center Angels met recently to discuss and make plans for THE SEASON '82-83 series. The Angels of the Performing Arts Center are a prestigious volunteer group of ladies who support the cultural programs presented at PSU. These ladies donate their time and

for the
House



Frank "Bishop" McDuffie, Jr.

Continuing our tradition of allowing candidates for public office to make their own statements of candidacy, we are presenting Frank "Bishop" McDuffie, Jr., a candidate for the N.C. House of Representatives.

McDuffie, one of two Blacks vying for one of three seats up for grabs, is a citizen of Laurinburg (Scotland County) and chairman of the board and chief administrative officer of World famous Laurinburg Institute, one of the few private schools for Blacks in the county. Dr. Joy J. Johnson, the first Black from Robeson County to serve in the General Assembly and now a member of the N.C. Commission of Paroles, is a graduate of Laurinburg Institute.

Most recently McDuffie has been involved in founding and developing the Jazz Hall of Fame and the "Dizzy" Gillespie Center.

McDuffie lists the following as evidence of his community involvement: Delegate to North Carolina Democratic Convention; Member of Deacon Board at Bright Hopewell Baptist Church, Laurinburg, N.C.; Member of the Chamber of Commerce, Laurinburg, N.C.; Member of Laurinburg Jaycees, Laurinburg, N.C.; Member of Board of Directors of Light House Crisis Center, Laurinburg, N.C.; Special Consultant of North Carolina and Southeast Region for the Special Olympics; Member of N.A.A.C.P. and S.E.S.P.A. of Scotland County.

McDuffie noted, while making his announcement, "All the individuals that make up the 21st District are my concerns. Their needs, hopes, and problems are my interest. The ten issues that effect our district are: education, small business opportunities, farming incentives, employment and industrial development, health care, recreational and social opportunities, transportation, utility costs, judicial reforms and crime control.

There is no clear separation between these issues: many overlap. Many of our problems are shared concerns of other areas in our state. As your representative, I will bring not only an interest in our district improvement, but state wide capabilities and contracts. I intend to bring direction and motivation to this district elected office which has ready access to legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state government."

will entertain you with her selections from singers like Ray Charles, Billy Holiday and other popular jazz performers. The final attraction in the series, "Gateway to Atlantis," an underwater monster puppet show will be presented Saturday, March 26, 1983. Call now for the new exciting Performing Arts Center brochure, "The Curtain's Going Up" at 521-OPUS (0778).

The Angels of the Performing Arts Center agreed to host a series of coffee parties where representatives from the Performing Arts Center will come into their homes with a presentation explaining the exciting attractions for the coming year. The coffee parties will give others the opportunity to subscribe to THE SEASON '82-83.

Those in attendance were Mrs. Doris Johnson, Mrs. Eleanor Ebert, Mrs. Judith Locklear, Mrs. Earlene Locklear, Mrs. Adrene Locklear, Mrs. Debbie Morris, Mrs. Pam Baehre, and Mrs. Sherry Levy.

PRESS RELEASE FROM SENATOR NOBLE CONCERNING LUMBERTON SCHOOL SITUATION

The North Carolina General Assembly is involved in legislation hopefully putting to rest the longstanding controversy concerning annexations to the Lumberton School Unit. The legislation will de-annex the Clyburn Pines-Country Club area from the school district while assuring the continued inclusion of the Lakewood Estates and Barker Ten Mile areas.

It is unfortunate that we were forced to deal with the issue at all. A similar annexation to the Fairmont city school district was approved by the federal authorities. It would seem that the blame for this mess must be laid at the feet of the attorneys who represented the residents of these areas when they petitioned for annexation, who apparently did not do all that was legally required for them to become a part of the city school unit, and the chairman of the city school board. We were, thus, saddled with the difficult task of solving a problem not of our making.

As most people are aware, the United States Attorney General, under the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, objected to all the local legislation annexing areas outside the city proper to the Lumberton School District. As a consequence, the United States Supreme Court enjoined the residents of these annexed areas from serving on the city board of education or voting in any election of its members. The North Carolina State Attorney General then ruled that the county may no longer levy the supplemental city school tax upon property within the annexed areas. Therefore, it appeared that the Lumberton city schools were in imminent danger of losing all of the students from these areas. In the heat of the moment, rash statements were made that only served to inflame the controversy; however, I said then that reason should prevail, and that the parties involved should try in good faith to arrive at a negotiated settlement.

It appears that such a settlement has been reached. The plaintiffs agreed not to press any further with litigation if the Lumberton board would agree to the de-annexation of the Clyburn Pines-Country Club area. This the Lumberton board unanimously agreed to do, and the Robeson County Board of Education also unanimously accepted the settlement.

This area was de-annexed because of pressure from the federal authorities. They are more inclined to approve the other areas as they constitute suburbs of the city proper, thereby affording a non-racial justification for the annexation, while Clyburn Pines is still largely rural.

The people of the Clyburn Pines area are just as concerned about quality education as any other parents in the county, however, the two school boards have agreed to minimize any interruption of the educational process. All students will continue to attend city schools for the 1982-83 school year. Next, the students then in grades 10-12 will be given a choice of finishing high school in Lumberton or with the county.

While I realize this settlement will not satisfy everyone on either side of the controversy, it was the unanimous decision of the two involved boards of education; therefore, I as well as the other members of the local legislative delegation, agreed to support the necessary legislation to effectuate the compromise. It demonstrates anew that our problems can be resolved if the good people of our three races simply talk to each other.

Again, I did not create the problem and I did not make the decision on the solution, but it is my duty as elected official to work with other elected officials.

Send Off

for

Miss Lumbee

Saturday



Jackie Jacobs, Miss Lumbee

The Town of Pembroke and Lumbee Regional Development Association request the honor of your presence at Send Off for Miss Lumbee, Jackie Jacobs, to the Miss North Carolina State Pageant to be held Saturday, June 19, 1982 at 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon. The send off will be held at Sheff's Seafood Restaurant, West 3rd Street, Pembroke, NC.

CORRECTION

In last week's report on the Town of Pembroke meeting, I mistakenly located the rezoning of the property on Fourth St. as First St. Also I reported that Reggie Ozendine had announced to the Pembroke board the resignation of Mr. Boyd Carter. I apologize to Reggie Strickland, former mayor of Pembroke, for changing his name.

Johnny Dial signs with PSU

PEMBROKE--Johnny Dial, a native of Pembroke, has been signed and will play baseball at Pembroke State University during the 1983 season.

Announcement was made Tuesday by PSU Head Baseball Coach Harold Ellen. "We are pleased to have Johnny come to play baseball at Pembroke State and complete his education," stated the PSU head coach. "He has some fine baseball tools which could make him one of the finest catchers in the state. We are looking for good things from him."

Dial, a 5-foot-11, 180 pound catcher, comes as a transfer from Southeastern Community College. At Southeastern, Dial was all-conference at third base in 1981 where he batted .508 and slammed 12 home runs. In 1982, Dial was named all-conference at the catcher position and batted .472 and knocked seven homers. He was MVP of the team both years at Southeastern and won two batting titles.