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BOARD OF EDUCATION KEEPS BIGGS AND VOTES "NO" ON INDIAN ATTORNEY

by Connie Brayboy

The Robeson County Board of Education met in one of its shorter sessions on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 1977. Board members had received in the mail a proposal from the chairman, Mr. Ralph Hunt. The proposal was concerning the possibility of shortening the board meetings. Some discussion was had on this proposal although no action was taken.

The board heard a report on testing in the schools from Mrs. Gladys Britt, coordinator of instructional services, assisted by Mrs. Jessie Byrd who is in charge of testing. The report was at the request of the board at the November meeting. The reports on all the testing in the schools are to be given in a series. The first one was given on the tests which are given to the children entering first grade.

Once again the Board was faced with the matter of the school board attorney. This time they were forced to make a decision. Harbert Moore moved that they, in essence, relieve present attorney, I. Murchison Biggs, of his duties and retain the law firm of Locklear and Brooks of Pembroke. The motion was seconded by Rev. Bob Mangum. During the discussion period, only one member had any discussion. That member was Mr. David Green, member from Parkton. He stated his desire to make the decision according to the democratic process. Said he, "If the present attorney is not doing his job, we owe it to the public to let them know...My concern is that this board always do things according to the democratic process." He expressed his belief that if the present attorney had a contract, they should uphold that contract until the contract expired. He spoke with much feeling about the board conducting their business with dignity and grace. After this, Mr. Biggs spoke. He said, in essence, he felt that the board should either relieve him or their counsel or retain his firm for an extended period of time. He was not concerned with waiting until the

expiration of his contract. He, it seemed to me, issued the board an ultimatum. He pleaded for them to settle the matter at that meeting and be done of it. Then the vote was taken. Voting for the motion were: Harbert Moore and Rev. Bob Mangum. Voting against were: Tommy D. Swett, David Green, Shirley Britt, Simeon Oxendine, Lillian Faye Locklear and Laymon P. Locklear did not vote, although they did not abstain from voting.

The attorney read a ruling from the attorney general's office concerning the release of SAT scores to the press and to individual board members. Much discussion followed. Tommy D. Swett, in an effort to stress a point about the release of scores without releasing a plan to improve the scores of minority students compared the release of scores to the press to the release of a body x-ray to the public. His point being that it would be like releasing the tool used by a doctor to make a diagnosis rather than releasing the diagnosis. To which the chairman answered, "...that is not the issue. The issue is we have a monkey. Now what are we going to do with it?" To which Swett replied, "I just don't want us to throw him into the street."

According to the attorney general's reply, the SAT scores should be released. Because the old board had made a motion to keep the superintendent from releasing the SAT scores, which have been compiled, a motion was necessary to release him from that request. Such a motion was made by Laymon P. Locklear. The motion carried. Next came a motion from Rev. Bob Mangum that the SAT scores be released to the Board at the conclusion of the reports on the other testing that had begun at the meeting.

In other matters, Carlton Dial had the bid high for the rental of the property which was bought for the new Pembroke Elementary School.

I. Murchison Biggs Retained

Comments On Board Of Education Decision

"I support affirmative action all the way...My only opposition is the method in which we do things...If we have a vacancy I am in favor of filling it with a minority...My opposition was based on the way we did it..."

David Green, Board Member, The Robeson County Board of Education.

"I thought it was the right thing to do. That's about all I can say about it..."

L. Harbert Moore, Board Member, The Robeson County Board of Education.

"Hey, I didn't vote. I am in favor of hiring an Indian attorney at the appropriate time..."

Laymon Poe Locklear, Board Member, Robeson County Board of Education.

"The whole intent of those who thought to break double voting in the courts was to bring about Indian self determination. The board's action Tuesday night leaves the appearance that some members do not believe that we can be masters of our own fate...I am totally shocked!"

Janie Maynor Locklear, Plaintiff, Break Double Vote Law Suit.

"Why is it that Indians and Blacks cannot look after their own? Is there an unwritten law that Indians and Blacks are on self destruct?"

Wishes to remain anonymous.

"...Only fitting to let a man (Biggs) serve out his contract..."

Simeon Oxendine, Board Member, Robeson County Board of Education.

"Where were the boys?"

Curt Locklear, former candidate for the Robeson County Board of Education and Owner of Pembroke Hardware.

"It should have been left alone until the time came to deal with it...The action was premature. I feel we should honor his (I. Murchison Biggs) employment like we honor everyone else's who was there before we took office...Also feel the board should have an opportunity to consider others instead of having only one choice. When we're speaking of fairness and equal opportunity, especially equal opportunity, we should consider that some of the board members don't even know the firm: they were supposed to vote on- We should have a choice."

Tommy D. Swett, Member Robeson County Board of Education.

Early Bullard, 88, died Sunday at Scotland Memorial Hospital following an extended illness. He was the first Indian to ever serve as Judge. He served as judge in the Maxton Recorder's Court from 1954-1958. He was a retired farmer from the Prospect Community and a Pembroke Businessman. For many years he owned and operated the Pembroke Farmer's Exchange. He was a former trustee of the Cherokee Indian Normal School which is now Pembroke State University.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Jan. 12, 1977 at Prospect United Methodist Church. Rev. Harvey Lowry officiated. Burial followed in the cemetery.

He is survived by one son, Clement Bullard of the Prospect Community, two brothers, Rev. Johnnie Bullard and Lennie Bullard, and a host of other relatives and friends.

'Miss Lumbee,' Linda Locklear, overcomes Tragedy of Youth

To Represent People In 'Miss N.C. Pageant'



LINDA LOCKLEAR...As "Miss Lumbee," she will proudly represent her Indian people in the "Miss North Carolina" contest.

By Gene Warren

Pembroke--When the reigning "Miss Lumbee"--Linda Gail Locklear--a beautiful 21-year-old Indian girl, was nine years old, both of her parents were killed along with seven others in a pickup-train collision between Maxton and Red Springs.

They were en route to a ball game. Only one person survived the accident, one of the most tragic in Robeson County history. Linda's mother, Viola, was 27 years old; her father, Howard, was 32.

Among the others were Linda's great uncle and great aunt. Most of the others were relatives. Luckily for Linda, neither she nor her three sisters or brothers were in the pickup truck.

Linda's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Chavis of Route 3, Maxton, took the tremendous responsibility of raising these children along with their own son. He is a building contractor and farmer. They raised in Linda a girl who will bid for "Miss North Carolina" when that pageant is held in June at Winston-Salem.

The trauma of the accident now long past, Linda can talk about what happened. "It occurred only six miles from our home," she reflected. She is indebted to her aunt and uncle who raised her like their own and have sent her through four years of college at Pembroke State University. She graduates this year with a double major in political science and journalism.

As "Miss Lumbee," an honor which she won in a field of 12 contestants last July 1 during the annual Lumbee

Homecoming, Linda feels she has a unique honor in representing the Indians of Robeson County. "My title represents an ethnic group. I am seeking to bring as much attention to our Lumbee Indians as possible," she says proudly.

As queen she has already attended 26 pageants throughout North Carolina, several of which "Miss America" also attended. She drives a '76 Mustang, which is provided her for winning "Miss Lumbee." Other gifts include a luggage set and a wardrobe for the "Miss North Carolina" contest.

Even now she works part-time after school in the library of the Lumbee Regional Development Association at Pembroke.

Following graduation from PSU, she hopes to go either to law school at UNC-Chapel Hill or to journalism school at East Carolina University. "My big interest is civil rights," says Linda. "I'd like to work for the government in some phase of Indian affairs, perhaps for the Bureau of Indian Affairs."

Although her home is only 15 miles from Pembroke, Linda has lived on campus at PSU all four years. "I love Pembroke State. If I hadn't lived on campus, I wouldn't have gotten to know so many people from all areas of the state," she explains. "In this way, I have met people from many different social backgrounds."

At PSU Linda has thrived. She was captain of the cheerleaders in '75, second runner-up to "Miss PSU" in '74, a member of the homecoming court in '75--and has been "Little Sister" for Pi Kappa Alpha Fraternity, a member of Kappa Delta Sorority and a member of the American Indian Student organization.

She is also cover girl for this year's PSU basketball and wrestling brochure.

A '73 graduate of Prospect High School near Pembroke, Linda won all kinds of honors there: "Who's Who in American High Schools," National Honor Society, Beta Club, History Award, Civic Award, and a member of the Spanish Club and Gym Club.

Her hobbies are dancing, painting, gymnastics, swimming and reading.

Her talent in winning the "Miss Lumbee" contest was gymnastics and contemporary modern dancing. She will use classical dancing as her talent in the "Miss North Carolina" contest.

Linda stays busy as "Miss Lumbee." On Jan. 29, she will be at Denton along with "Miss North Carolina" and 25 other queens helping to raise funds for the March of Dimes. Her chaperone for all of these events is Mrs. Florence Ransom of Pembroke.

What is Linda's goal? "To win the Miss North Carolina contest," she replies with a coquettish smile.

Who's to say this girl, who has flowered in every way despite the tragedy of her childhood, won't achieve that goal?



Mr. Early Bullard

EDUCATION FOR HANDICAPPED INDIAN CHILDREN: A new Federal law requires school systems to have appropriate programs to meet the needs of handicapped children. BIA sponsored a November meeting in Albuquerque to initiate plans for implementing the Act and helping Indian handicapped children. Participants from around the country included parents of handicapped children, IHS representatives and BIA school, social service and administrative officials.

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Lumbee River Electric Lambasted For Skyrocketing Light Bills

More than 700 consumers spilled out of the O.P. Owens Auditorium last Thursday night as irate customers (many with light bills in hand) and representatives from the Lumbee River Electric Membership Corp. met to air gripes and attempt to explain skyrocketing light bills.

The meeting was arranged by a committee, mostly from Clyborn Pines, that has been formed to fight light bills that have skyrocketed almost out of the range of the people's ability and means to pay.

Richmond Page, an attorney has been hired by the committee to press their grievances. Page chaired the meeting and attempted to keep it orderly. Repeatedly, the crowd was frustrated by the directive from Page that was "let the committee ask the questions."

Many of the irate customers had questions of their own and were hardly in a mood to let a committee (mostly unrepresentative from Clyborn Pines) ask the questions that they wished to ask themselves.

One Indian lady spoke fervently of the anti-christ aspects of the gathering and asked in exasperation, "I just want to know one thing; can you or can you not tell us whether we are going to have to pay outrageous light bills like this in the future?"

The coop officials could not answer her. They blamed Carolina Power & Light Co., and the oil embargo and the economy as the culprits in the matter. They talked about the rising costs of electricity nationwide. They talked about the added costs of electricity caused by environmental groups.

But the consumers remained frustrated and angry. The slightly unruly crowd pressed forward on occasion, completely encircling the coop officials in their midsts. The more the coop officials explained the more angry the consumers became because the answers given were unsatisfactory in the main.

A lawyer who represents coops statewide catalogued the woes of rural coops, noting that the federal power commission and the state utilities commissions had allowed CP & L two inflationary rate increases, one of 168% in 1975 and another of 75% in 1976.

Lumbee River Electric Membership Corp., like most coops, buys its electricity from major companies like Carolina Power & Light Company and have, as they rationalize, passed the increased costs on to the consumers.

A lawyer present explained that CP & L was selling electricity to coops on a fixed contract in the 60s and early 70s and, according to them, they lost money when the economy was hit by inflation and the oil embargo. As soon as they were released from the fixed contract, they immediately implored the federal power commission to allow them to raise prices. And they were allowed to do so, even though both rate increases had been challenged by coops nationally. The rate increases are in effect although the matter is still in the courts.

Some consumers present showed light bills in November with representative figures showing a November bill of \$76.00 and a December bill of more than \$300.00. The bill seemed to be representative and reflective of most of the 16,000 consumers who own Lumbee River Electric Membership Corp.

There did not seem to be any Indians or Blacks on the Clyborn Pines Committee, although this reporter was told after the meeting that four Indians had been added to the committee.

Deryl Hinson, general manager of Lumbee River Electric, avowed, at Thursday night's meeting that "I am probably the most hated man in the county." Many in the audience shouted back forcefully, "You said that right!"

WHAT IS THE HOPE FOR THE CONSUMER?
What is the hope for the consumer?

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REP. HORACE LOCKLEAR
HOPES FOR PEMBROKE
COURTHOUSE

Rep. Horace Locklear has expressed that one of his goals for his first year in office as the 21st Congressional District's newest legislator is to obtain for Pembroke a district courthouse. "Studies have shown that the case load will support such a move," said Locklear.

Apart from this, Locklear said that he is hoping to spend his first year learning about the House as thoroughly as possible.

PSU BRACE FACE
CAMPBELL TONIGHT

PSU's Braves, who are on a three game winning streak and 6.4 for the young season, face the fierce challenge of playing their first NAIA District 29 contest at Campbell (8-3) tonight at 8 p.m. A preliminary contest between the girls' teams of the two schools is set for 6 p.m.

Last season Campbell best PSU decisively three times, 72-63 in the finals on the Campbell Tip-Off Tournament, 94-73 at Campbell and 82-67 at Pembroke.

But after PSU defeated Catawba's leaders of the Carolinas Conference 83-76 Monday, Coach Joe Gallagher enthused: "We have beaten the two best teams in the conference (Guilford and Catawba). I think we are capable of beating anyone." His task and that of the Braves will be tough tonight.

PSU'S TOM GARDNER
FOURTH IN DISTRICT SCORING

Raymond Epps, Norfolk State's 6-foot 6 center-forward from Richmond, is the scoring leader of NAIA District 29 in the first release of averages. The preseason small college All-American selection is averaging 25.4 points per game.

Second is Mark Chafin of Liberty Baptist with a 24.1 average. Completing the first five are Liberty Baptist's William DeShazor with 22.1, Pembroke State's Tom Gardner with 20.4 and Hampton Institute's Marvin Payne with 20.3.

Payne is the No. 1 rebounder with 13.7 recoveries per contest, followed by Campbell's Sam Staggers with 13.0.

In field goal percentage the leader is Atlantic Christian's Tom Umberger with a 65.2 mark. Next is Virginia State's Victor Jones with a 64.1 percentage.

The free throw shooting leader is Liberty Baptist's Karl Hess with a 91.6 percentage. Next is Pembroke State's Gardner with 82.3.

division of the Attorney General's office was at the meeting as an observer, as was Sam Noble, chairman of the county commissioners.

The consumers came to the meeting angry and frustrated and most left the same way. Even the answers that might have been considered plausible in calmer times were shouted down with hoots of "Hey, we can't understand all this legal talk. Why don't you break it down so we can understand it?"

The consumers milled around after the meeting, still frustrated and angry. Their complaints were not answered to their satisfaction and, as one Indian put it "We come to a meeting like this concerned and sincere and here Cecil Dunn jumps out a trying to use us for the wrong reason. God help the poor little fellow like me."

Another said, "I want something done about my light bill but, at the same time I don't want nobody like Cecil Dunn a trying to use my anger and frustration to jump up on a soap box and try to make a come back. Watch my words. I'll bet you a dollar against a donut that he runs in the next election."

The committee promised more meetings and, after the meeting, one of them said that they were circulating a petition to withdraw the present board of directors, fire Hinson, and restructure the coop at a special called membership meeting some time in the future.

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Said one irate member at the meeting, "I sure don't see much hope there..."

Hinson and other officials attempted to explain the way the cost of electricity is figured, saying, in essence, that CP & L bases their cost on the peak day of the coop which was July 23, 2976. That is the factor used by CP & L to figure how much they will charge coops for electricity. The problem, no matter how much CP & L charges, is that the cost is tacked on to the light bills of the consumers.

Hinson also raised the hackles of the audience, when in response to a question from the committee, he stated that his salary is \$34,000 a year and the use of an automobile and other benefits. Many in the audience hooted in derision.

Cecil Dunn Revives Bad
Memory For Indians & Blacks

Many Indians and Blacks questioned Cecil Dunn emerging as a spokesman for the committee from Clyborn Pines. He was president of the coop when Rev. Elias Rogers sued the Lumbee River Coop and collected damages for tampering with proxy ballots and refusing to seat him on the board in the late 60s. Until Rogers won his law suit, no Indian or Black had ever served on the coop board.

A number of the present board members were present at the meeting and sat quietly as Dunn and others lambasted them. They were irate after the meeting. A member of the board, a White, remembered Dunn saying, in times past, that he would never allow an Indian or Black to serve on the coop board if he had anything to do with it.

A number of the board members also remembered that many of the projects undertaken by the coop were initiated under Dunn's leadership.

Dunn, among other things, was accused in Roger's law suit, of tampering with proxy votes and actually having them flushed down a toilet.

Many also thought that the unrepresentative Clyborn Pines Committee was attempting to abrogate the duties of the board of directors and, without reason, tar them with an unseemly brush.

Dunn was challenged by an Indian after the meeting. Said the Indian, "Dunn, you ought to be ashamed of yourself," and catalogued his litany of complaints.

Hinson asked the committee to come and talk to him at his office in a more conducive setting. One consumer, from the floor, questioned the right of the committee to represent him. The consumer, the voice, hardly audible in the anger of the high light bills, shouted, "We elected the board of directors to represent us. They ought to be given an opportunity to address our grievances."

But Dunn and the Clyborn Pines Committee drew wild applause.

Jerry Fruit, from the consumer's