

EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

...the voice of the drum is an offering to the Spirit of the World. Its sound arouses the mind and makes men feel the mystery and power of things.

-BLACK ELK



AS I SEE IT

Bruce Barton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REALITIES OF LIFE IN ROBESON COUNTY

Running a newspaper in Robeson County is a precarious business, fraught with danger. Running an Indian oriented newspaper in Robeson County is doubly frustrating and precarious. One must remain constantly on alert, careful to not fall prey to the realities of life in Robeson County. But realities are life: we can't always run from life. Sometimes, we must face up to things as they are.

I do not wish to be bitter or deprecating to others but the Indian's precarious perch on the societal ladder of Robeson County sometimes causes a spill. Anyway, why should there be a societal pecking order in Robeson County? Who decided that the whites are on the top rung? And where does that leave the Indian and Black? Why scrambling for second place of course? That psychological mind set has caused the enmity that exists between Indians and Blacks today. They do not trust each other and, in most cases, do not like one another. They are a threat, one to the other. What is ironic is that in many cases the white conservatives in our fair county pull both their chains.

It is dangerous to talk of these things, especially if one is not financially secure and is indebted to lending institutions for intermittent monetary injections.

FEW FRIENDS IN A TIME OF NEED

The Carolina Indian Voice is not financially secure, nor are we able to survive with our souls in tact without straying occasionally from the proverbial white line in the middle of the road. We are doing fair, but we are not well off. Every once in a while we run into problems, Internal Revenue Service, creditors, etc. And we have to scramble for our lives. But we are surviving, keeping our heads above water.

Such was the case recently. Where did we go? Well, to friends at first. At least we thought they were our friends until we needed them. The need ruptured our supposed friendship. Friends - Indian friends - turned us down, not coldly but for a variety of reasons. Most of the more financially secure ones were (so they said) over extended or they did not wish to face the wrath of their wives for co-signing a note for us. They mostly were sympathetic but not responsive to our needs. We can understand that; but we necessarily don't like it.

When the Lumbee, a weekly newspaper that preceded us in Pembroke was in operation the same friends we approached pumped some \$30,000 into it in vain. The Lumbee failed abysmally. The Indians hired a number of white editors to attempt to salvage their good intentioned enterprise. They paid and paid and paid in vain. Does it have something to do with the psychological madness of Robeson County that these Indian friends would pump \$30,000 into the Lumbee a newspaper edited and operated by whites, and not a dime into a newspaper (The Carolina Indian Voice) edited and operated by Indians like themselves? Why? Is it my unruly locks? My independent spirit? My arch incredulous brow? I don't know but the

answer to this inquiry is the answer to our common problem. And our problem is our collective scared psyches. Do we accept our psychological make up as it is or do we attempt to change our attitudes, enhance our self images?

AND THE BANKS LOOKED ASKANCE AT US

And then we went to the banks, both at home and in Lumberton. I suspect that we are victims of a murky game in economic circles in Robeson County. We can't prove it, but our paranoia has made us suspicious and wary.

We attempted to borrow a small sum of money in vain. Two county commissioners agreed orally to co-endorse our note. Additionally, the editor of The CIV offered to put up a lot and car in addition to the two co-endorsers. The banks refused to make the loan and finally, the banker at the last bank we approached, without amplification said, "the truth is we just don't want to make the loan." Why? Well, your conjecture is as good as mine. Incidentally, one of the commissioners we approached is the largest stock holder at the last bank we approached.

Did our supposed vulnerability seek the economic hounds on us? Did they reason: "let's take care of this journalistic pest once and for all?" Did they set us up to topple us?

We don't know. We squirmed out of our dilemma by hitting the road and collecting monies owed us. And money isn't always easy to come by. We have to be real. We have to be real until they were patched.

A LESSON LEARNED

The lesson learned is that the price of one's soul is not for exchange in the market place. It is not for sale. And one should pay particular attention to his business if his livelihood is tied into the fabric of public life. And the newly coined axiom is "don't play the game if you can't pay the bill." And, most of all, work desperately to stay out of economic harm's way. We accept the challenge and promise, anew, to tell the story of a proud and courageous people (the Robeson County Indians) in a far and objective manner.

It is good to be alive and well and up and about doing what makes one feel good and useful. Survival teaches one many lessons. I have shared a brief outline of our recent difficulties to say loud and clear to all who will listen that you can do your own thing with out selling out to the economic and political devils in our midst.

An Indian sage once told me: "keep you soul unfettered and work hard at your task in life." That is what I plan to do, a little wiser now but not trampled under foot by the realities of life in Robeson County.

Thanks to those who read and support The Carolina Indian Voice. We shall attempt to live up to your high expectations. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to take a crack at fulfilling a life's dream: the establishment of a newspaper that tells it like it is from the Indian perspective.

More on Prospect School Situation from Concerned Parent

To the Editor:

I'd like to take the opportunity to elaborate on the recent article to the editor entitled "Sees Non-Recognition as Harmful to Child."

To the parents I want to say that it's too bad and most inexcusable that yours as well as mine must be hurt by such heartless practices. And at the same time nobody is "aware" that every thing isn't as it should be.

You see, the student body is classed into two groups, "Selects" and "Culls." The latter is stifled, their ineffectiveness squelched and made to feel as the least of the less desired. Other words, give me your blood (your talents, whatever they may be, all your creative energies, etc.), all that you have to offer to make MY institution look good to every one that doesn't know the costs. Approved, now you can go to H... The selects is another story. They'll make it by hook or crook and it's usually both.

You thought that when you stood in opposition to a cause that was brought to fore, recently, that you had done a real service for our school community, just the opposite learned. The things you have learned and now know for a fact, you would not have believed nor accepted as an existing practice had you not met head on through your child's experience. I'm sorry your child had to pay such a price in order for you to know what all the ruckus is about between Administration and parents who are concerned enough about what's happening to student morale to buck the tide.

It is hoped that you will use your experience to help stir other parents to the fact that those are our children in Prospect school and we have every right to be involved and concerned about what happens to our youth and how it happens. I can't say it loud enough, that we, as parents, better start caring enough to look into and observe the atmosphere in which our children spend most of their awake hours. Away with the silly notion that as long as my child isn't involved I don't care. They haven't even bothered to project into the future enough to see that in due time, they'll be caught up in the same vicious tenacity that engulfed your child. These kind of things don't just start with you. They were happening at the time you believed you were helping to better the situation. In essence, you along with others refused to SEE what you were LOOKING on.

I have to say at this point, that it was for this reason and some relative, that concerned parents began to ask questions in an effort to discourage the continuance of such noted practices as being injurious to the "total" student. At this point, a loud wail came forth: "troublemakers, agitators, the community scum is making an attack on the Administration of the school!" Why not? Our children constitute the school that provides the jobs that is their livelihood. Why not insist for improvements, any one can profit on this point? Why not insist on a policy of across the board honesty and fair play equal for all the school body? Yes, the parents of the children in this school should in fact force into existence some positive action for the sake of the children. My children are my responsibility as well as a sharing of the responsibility for others and to see to it that they move, work and play in totally conducive atmosphere. Administrative staff take care of

the well-being of their children, and they should - by the same measure, so ought we to do the same for ours. You see it's as simple as protecting what is ours by whatever means deemed necessary. If we, as concerned parents don't force out the undesirable policies practiced in our school and tolerated at the local level, our kids are going to pay a heavy penalty as a result of our slothfulness.

It's too bad children suffer from such experiences as yours. Some readers may say why all the fuss? It's all about the total effects these incidents have upon the children and SHOULD NEVER come by any way of any school door! Heavens forbid! Schools should have all the community input it can get to make school a good experience.

Let me tell you about another incident that occurred about three years ago in our school. There was a so-called "Talent" program sponsored by the school, staged in the gym, for the purpose of naming a "Queen" that had already been "pre-picked." As it would be, one of the prettiest girls in the Prospect High School did a marvelous presentation of one of the great Shakespeare's works. May I add that in my humble opinion, she should have gotten some recognition. It was obvious that she had put a lot of concentration and effort into the role she so beautifully portrayed. I thought, at the time, it goes without saying, she'll be among the finalists. Well, to my disbelief, she failed to be recognized. The conspicuous "game" for the "names" of a select few cease to operate - not so in this case. I'm sure your child feels no more disappointment than did this girl. Similar experiences have befallen others, but I remember this one because it was a well-prepared presentation for no recognition from the school that I ever heard about. (Another case of "your blood.")

If the Administration in the school or at the county level was concerned about the well-being of children, this kind of thing wouldn't happen. Oh, they can say what they may, you see who gets recognition and it's not two or three months old and is made "AWARE" of their negligence by outside sources by failing to offer the little reward of public attention. It's DEPLORABLE that our community will TOLERATE such misdeeds at the children's expense. If it's something right and good for my children, I don't care who gets mad at me speaking in their behalf. If I don't, nobody else has any right to do anything either. I'm prepared and I hope you are so prepared to act alone if necessary as often as necessary for whatever is right for our children. When you're working for "right" you're automatically thrown into an unpopular minority group. I guess that might comply with something I've read somewhere before to the effect that straight and narrow is THE WAY and few there be that find it.

I hope as an outgrowth of your recent experience that you will fall abreast with other concerned parents and concentrate on re-storing wholesome morals, spark inventiveness and an un-squelched spirit of competitiveness for all students, equal and fair. And if speaking up for these attributes causes one to be called "troublemaker," "crazy," etc., then I don't mind in the least because it's for children that I care - others as well as mine. Long ago it became necessary for me to explain to our children that

they were wearing the wrong name and because of it they couldn't read in certain books because that was the privilege of the "selects." (Although they read the forbidden books at home and did so very well.) It's imperative that we stress positive attitudes in the children to solidify a better base for the future. If we fail there's plenty of vultures with possible five letter names, just waiting for the right moment to devour their prey, and they're masquerading all the titles that belong to the church.

Another student recently had the misfortune of not being able to get grades earned properly recorded. Incidentally, she too wears the wrong name. The administration was made AWARE of the dilemma at hand. The child was withdrawn from the school and placed in another to be spared embarrassment and any future harassment. This should never have happened, but it's tolerated. This sort of thing will continue unless parents become distraught with concern for pupil welfare enough to move off their rocker and make a positive move against the Monarchy rule.

We'd better start caring for our children and the community of which we're all a part now, or we can soon wish we could forget it but can't.

Walter Lowry
P. O. Box 1033
Pembroke, NC

Former resident Remembers

Dear Sir:

I've made Indiana my home for a lot of years, but I still consider North Carolina my home. You see, I was born and reared on a farm just five miles outside of Lumberton. Yes, I'm a Lumbee Indian, except when I left North Carolina, we were still called Cherokee. But I like the change. It's different. We're all different. Such notables as Bernard Lowry and V. Brooks were my school teachers.

I take The Carolina Indian Voice and was much pleased to see Mr. Lowry's picture a few weeks ago.

I enjoy the paper a lot. I was in Pembroke last summer, but I must say there is one thing I am tired of reading about, and that is I. M. Biggs. I've heard my dad talk of Biggs all my life. It was a big store in Lumberton. If for no other reason, why don't you kick him out of the Indians' affairs just because he is white. He probably remembers a lot of times the Indians were kicked out because of their race. If I sound a little bitter, I'm sorry. Man, it gets back a long ways. There's an old saying: An Indian's memory is like an elephant. He never forgets an injury or a favor.

When I speak harshly of the white man, I only mean the ones in North Carolina, when I was a boy, treated Indians like dogs. I still carry the hate. Once you leave the South, the whites are much much different. They treat an Indian like he's really some body. In all the years I've lived in Indiana, I've never been treated bad because of my race. I can even get upset when I go back home and walk down the streets of Lumberton. Here I have even been looked up to because of my race. So, do the Indians a favor, send I. M. Biggs on his way. So we can stop reading his name in our paper.

Again, may I say I enjoy the paper very much, also your editorials. Keep up the good work.

Thank you
A fellow Lumbee and proud of it,
Jim Jacobs
602 Pine
Muncie, Indiana

STRAINED RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE AND PROSPECT SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

A number of parents in the Prospect School community have called the Carolina Indian Voice and chastised us for not carrying news from Prospect School. We want to ... very much. The problem, quite frankly, is that there is a strained relationship between the Carolina Indian Voice and the administration of Prospect School. Who's to blame? Probably both of us. Internecine feuds between Indians are self destructive and counter productive.

Part of the problem is that Connee Brayboy, associate editor of the Carolina Indian Voice, is a member of an ad hoc parents committee named "Concerned Parents of Prospect School." The committee has questioned many of the policies of the present administration of Prospect School, as well as the administration of the Robeson County Administrative School Unit.

Therein lies the problem, at least most of it. The Carolina Indian Voice has suffered and Prospect School has suffered.

We propose a new attitude, a bigness of spirit from both the Carolina Indian Voice and the Prospect School administration. We will carry the news from Prospect School if it is shared with us.

Public institutions like the media and the schools are both subject to criticism, sometimes of a very harsh nature. That is the price one pays for taking care of the public's business in the public square.

The Carolina Indian Voice promises anew to attempt to be objective and understanding with Prospect School and all schools in the system. Our newspaper is open to them. That is why we began the Carolina Indian Voice ... so that our readers could use the medium to exchange and share news and ideas. We are interested primarily in showcasing the Indian experience in Robeson County. We are not interested in feuding with any Indian individual or institution; that would be counter productive to our stated aim.

Still, it takes two to tango. The associate editor of this newspaper has an inherent right to express her views and work to improve the situation at the school her children attends. It seems that we should be able to do both: carry the news of Prospect School and allow staff members of the Carolina Indian Voice to express their opinions. They are two different things. Conversely, the administrators of Prospect School are not obligated to accept as gospel items or opinions expressed in this paper. But we can work together if we are both willing and bigger than our individual differences.

Our forebears were born and raised in Prospect and relatives abound in that beautiful countryside. Prospect is home, the roots from which we sprang screaming into the Robeson County heavens. We care deeply about our relationship with the place of our birth and nourishment.

Aghast at Congressional Pay Raises

Dear Mr. Editor:

After reading so much about our Congress' \$12,900 a year increase, pay raise, I think it is time everyone wrote to our President and Congress, asking that something be done faster for the poor.

I guess they can afford to buy their own TVs and drive their own cars now, sure enough.

Let me have just their pay raise and I think I can buy a color TV and a new car too.

Cornelius L. Hocker
Rt. 1 Box 299
Pembroke, NC 28372

P. S. Somebody should say Amen. Who is sinning the most, the poor unemployed or our legislators?

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are welcome. We encourage our readers to express themselves subject to the following conditions:

Letters should include the signed name, address and telephone number of the writer.

THE CAROLINA INDIAN VOICE

Published Each Thursday by The Lumbee Publishing Company

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Instate - 1 Year \$7.28
2 Years \$10.40
OUT OF STATE:
1 Year \$8.00
2 Years \$12.00

MEMBER: American Indian Press N.C. Press Association

God grant me the serenity to accept that which I cannot change; courage to change that which I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.

The Carolina Indian Voice desires to be promptly of a change of address. Send change address to: The Carolina Indian Voice, P. O. Box 1075, Second Carolina Parkway, Pembroke, NC 28372.

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mine feel better.

Still, a fellow can't have ever' thing. Right now I'll just settle for feeling better. Cold weather reminds Ol' Reasonable just how feeble he is. And the high light bills and oil bills have re-reminded Ol' Reasonable just how pore he is.

Warm weather reminds Ol' Reasonable of other things. Maybe the warm weather will cause our new school board (6 Indians, 2 whites; and 1 Black; 8 to go to work. Spring is a good time to fire people who have been mistreating us. Guess who?

In Armed Forces

Navy Captain Phillip E. Johnson, whose wife, Carolyn, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Sampson of Pembroke, recently assumed command of the combat store ship USS White Plains during ceremonies at Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines.

The White Plains, homeported in Yokosuka, Japan, acts as a "floating store" for the combat ships assigned to the U.S. Seventh Fleet, stocking both general and technical supply items.

A 1952 graduate of the University of South Carolina, Columbia, with a bachelor of Science degree, he joined the Navy in June 1947.