

# EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

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

BLACK ELK



## Reader Expresses Views on Indian Education In Robeson County

Dear Bruce,

I noted with interest last week your announcement in the Carolina Indian Voice of your intent to begin a series of articles on Indian Education programs in Robeson County. I am enthusiastic about the articles and I hope they will bring to light the true story about the potential of Indian Education and its impact on the education of not only our Indian children, but all children in Robeson County.

It is my understanding that the federal auditors will make a report and send it back to the Board of Education for review and that the Board will have the option to accept the report or to reject the suggestions. I sincerely hope that the Indian parents will have an opportunity to know the contents of the report and that we will not allow the bureaucrats to make the decisions for our children for us. At the time of their audit I became very upset and called on other community leaders to help identify their real purpose and intent, and I was told it would be best to react to them after they had submitted their report. I am still waiting, because many of the things I have said here I plan to say to William Bennett in the Office of Indian Education of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. I hope that other Indian parents will join with me in the reaction of joining our decisions made for us, but far more important than reacting, is becoming involved in the education of our children, and that means looking beyond our schools as well as looking into them as to just what we really want for our children. Let us not be deceived that just because some federal auditors or other bureaucrats fly into the area, that they have the power to control our affairs. No federal government office has the power to come into local government units and make changes, only recommendations. Our County Commissioners have the authority to accept or reject federal recommendations, and it may well come to the point where we as Indians must ask our County Commissioners to remind the federal bureaucracy of the appropriate and proper lines of authority. Let us not fall into their trap of wanting to divert IEA monies to other Indian groups and tribes while accusing us of "misusing funds" for non-Indian students, but let us stand firm and use our political leverage to let them know that we are aware of our needs and the legal stipulation giving us the authority to determine programs and services which we need for our children. And while we pursue the course of action to provide these services, I hope that we will not deny them to others, but will meet our needs as well as the needs of others.

Our own community, because we will not train them here, but in a larger community which will encompass not only the specialized training but a complex social order designed to require survival skills of all - not only Indians - but all ethnic groups. We can begin to work as parents, as Indians, and as community leaders, to instill in our children their right as individuals to make their own independent decisions and to develop their skills and abilities to function in any type of group or community. We must let our children know that their "Indianness" is not to be ashamed of, but neither is it to be used as a crutch. Positive self-concepts must begin with us as we pass them along to our children. We must believe in ourselves and our own abilities in order to motivate our children to fulfill theirs.

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Recently, federal auditors were in Robeson County to conduct an audit of the IEA program. It is my understanding that the Indian Education Act specified that Indian parents would have the responsibility for deciding which programs would best meet the special needs of Indian students. In my forty-five minute discussion with these auditors, they were more interested in why we needed a stapler or a calculator and how these tools would benefit Indian students and whether or not they were being used by Indian students. They refused to look at the applicability of programs and materials which had been purchased in our predominantly Indian schools, our former all-Indian schools, which are still located in predominantly Indian communities. My view, and one which I emphatically expressed to them, is that our former all-Indian schools are still situated in predominantly Indian communities, and that the programs and materials were benefiting the Indian community and the Indian students although some of the benefits might also be given to non-Indian students. This did not relinquish the benefits to the Indian students, but enrichment of the curriculum and the school curriculum for all students. The fact that some non-Indian students might receive benefits and services certainly did not diminish the services to Indian students. Unfortunately, I did not talk the way they wanted me to talk, so they spent two weeks on our campus but never came back to talk with me about the types and quality of materials, purchased or not, and the school curriculum for all students. The fact that some non-Indian students might receive benefits and services certainly did not diminish the services to Indian students. Unfortunately, I did not talk the way they wanted me to talk, so they spent two weeks on our campus but never came back to talk with me about the types and quality of materials, purchased or not, and the school curriculum for all students. The fact that some non-Indian students might receive benefits and services certainly did not diminish the services to Indian students. Unfortunately, I did not talk the way they wanted me to talk, so they spent two weeks on our campus but never came back to talk with me about the types and quality of materials, purchased or not, and the school curriculum for all students.

It is my sincere belief that we must expand our thinking beyond isolating IEA programs and services, and build programs and services which will meet our needs of educational enrichment, cultural enrichment, specialized services and programs in educational skills, and activities to expand classroom learning experiences, and we must do this in the framework of providing the services to Indian students but not denying access and participation by non-Indian students. To do so, is to defeat the long-term objectives and goals which we as Indians want for our children, and that is to grow up with the equal chance to participate in any function or activity in our society as an equal human being and neither be used as an instant Indian nor singled out as an Indian in racial condescension. We have already seen a change in the Indian Education program guidelines because we have allowed ourselves to think narrowly about just how we should use the money. I am afraid that many of our parents have placed "Indian only" signs like those we used to see years ago on the money and have failed to look beyond the benefits which they could bring to our children. We have deviated from the original intent of the IEA program to allow us to decide for ourselves what was best for our children, and because of our limited view, we have now allowed our decisions to be made for us. I cannot speak to other programs in other schools, but what once was a class for accelerated and gifted students using a team of teacher specialist in subject areas to challenge students to their fullest potential, has now become an all-Indian group with a classroom teacher to teach all subjects because the auditors said that our monies should be spent on Indian students only. While the teacher is qualified and capable teacher, he must now reach several levels of ability rather than using the teaching team to challenge the highest levels and motivate the accelerated and gifted children to their fullest potential. These children are not having their special needs met - their needs are being met as Indian students and not as accelerated and gifted students.

It is my understanding that in some schools in the county, materials and equipment purchased through IEA monies are kept in separate collections. The only difference in this and those signs we saw on restrooms several years ago is that the sign



AS I SEE IT  
Bruce Barton



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Luther H. Locklear succumbs**  
Mr. Luther H. Locklear, 83, died Tuesday night in Hamlet Hospital.

Funeral services are incomplete, but will be announced by Locklear and Son Funeral Home, which was founded by the deceased in 1948. His son, Samuel Locklear, now runs the funeral home business.

I honored and respected Mr. Luther H. Locklear. He was a man who dared to do what was thought "not for Indians" back in 1948 when he established his funeral home. He proved, in his own quiet way, that the color of a man's skin is incidental. Locklear and Son Funeral Home is modern and respected in the mortuary business. He built a firm foundation for his son who follows in his steps.

I respected the man so very much because he was a modest man who just went about his task doing it well and unobtrusively.

More and more, I appreciate my elders like Mr. Locklear who persevered and made today's progressive changes possible by the solid and non-inflammatory way he went about doing his life's task. He was a trend setter. He entered an until then closed field and showed just by working at it every day that a man can do what ever he wants to do if he is

### Notice To Readers

Due to the press of business and the North Carolina Indian Unity Conference in Greensboro which was attended by the editor, our series of articles on Indian Education will begin next week. Join with us next week as we begin our exploration of Indian Education in Robeson County and elsewhere. The series of articles will be opened and will

## Dissension Within Ranks Hurts Cause

I have chosen to address my comments about Indian Education prior to the release of your series as I am very sensitive to challenging the ideas of other Indians less it appear we are back-biting each other. I have been moved several times to react to some of the articles which have been released, but have chosen as my method of modus operandi to react individually to those with whom I disagree rather than publicly. My intent in this letter is not to react to other opinions, but simply to share with all my assessment of the Indian Education program as it now exists and some implications for future programming which I believe can improve the Indian Education program.

As a school media specialist, I have been very involved in the Indian Education program. I have often said that the IEA monies are the most flexible monies available to our school systems and that is still true. When I returned to teaching some five years ago, it was the culmination of a series of programs which had appropriated monies for educational enrichment in disadvantaged areas. I was gratified at the amount of materials and equipment which had been acquired under the auspices of Title I and Title II programs as well as additional educational programs. However, there were still restrictions placed on these monies as to how they could be used, by whom, and exactly what could be purchased with the monies. The same type of restrictions are placed on state monies which are made available to the schools in the types of materials which can be purchased with no equipment to be purchased at all with state monies.

With all these restrictions, you can imagine my excitement when I was told that I had \$3,000 to spend in materials and equipment with no strings attached under the Indian Education program. For the first time since I had worked in our schools in school library services, I had an opportunity to purchase materials and equipment which we needed and could not purchase with other budgets. Teachers had an opportunity to request learning materials and equipment which they needed and never had an opportunity to purchase. They could now look in professional magazines and in educational exhibits and find something they could use and needed and not have to say, "I sure would like to have that." Now they could say, "I would like to have that," with the confidence that they could get it for their respective classrooms.

Indian Education program monies became an extra lever for adding to the total educational program, not only in the area of Indian materials, but in materials and equipment which could enhance the overall experience of the students, not to mention the motivation of classroom teachers who could not request materials with a certain degree of assurance that they could receive the materials.

As a parent, I've heard my daughters ask why visitors have come into the classrooms and asked how many Indian children were in the room. They have also questioned why students are singled out because of race. This is understandable since they both attended a private integrated school before our Indian schools were ever desegregated, a decision which I have never regretted since they were able to adjust to an integrated situation but still maintain confidence and pride in themselves and in their Indianness. I now hope that IEA monies would be utilized to provide special programs in which they could participate, however, since they are Lumbee, and since we do live in an integrated society, I would also hope that these special programs and activities would serve a purpose of enriching their experiences as human beings and as an integral part of society, not just as Indians and in an isolated experience for Indians only. I have had the opportunity to work with young people of all ages and in a variety of educational experiences and activities, and because our children have been isolated in our homes, our predominantly Indian communities and our Indian churches, they have found it

pleasure of getting to know how some of our leaders work. A while back my political science professor introduced to our class a local Indian leader to speak to us. I wondered what he would say! I know from past experience that I worked like a fool for him to help get him elected to a position that would give the Indians a voice in the legislature. He won. But in class he said he only finished out the term of a legislative member whose seat was vacated due to death. That much I knew was true, but he forgot how hard people worked to get him re-elected to that seat. He next ran for judge and lost. We don't need a judge. We are all aware of our social problems. We need people interested in finding a solution for them and not a position for him.

Just who are our leaders? Are they the ones who leave for Washington (with more money in mind)? Are they the ones who are itching for positions in Raleigh? I had the

Jeannette Oxendine  
Route 3  
Maxton, NC 28364  
Prospect Beauty Shop

### Letters to Editor Policy

Letter to the editor should personally deliver letter to the office of The Carolina Indian Voice located on Highway 711, East, Pembroke, for verification. If no telephone number, then reader should personally deliver letter to the office of The Carolina Indian Voice located on Highway 711, East, Pembroke, for verification. The editors reserve the right to reject letters of a libelous nature or those considered in bad taste.

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Across The Mayo Des...  
Mayor Rick Strickland Pembroke  
FREEDOM HAS...  
I would like to invite all citizens and attending the Tea at Livingston DDS...  
Our trip to Washington Conference with the cities informative.  
We are now open Manager-Council Government, please McDuffie Cummings help you with them.  
If you know of people interested considered for an one of the militia please contact Charlie Rose so the work can be done.

Our study numbering and study have been we hope to move near future. We ask with us on our to open bids the Street and other should be paved and resurfaced.  
There is no right the wrong thing.

TUTORS TO...  
All active in Pembroke area on March 29, 1977 p.m. The meeting in the recreation Presbyterian Church Preses Supply Co change in date to 24th to March 27th.

**Howard says**  
Pembroke Drug Center, Odum and W. 3rd, Pembroke, NC, 28372

**How to keep a safe home**  
Q: How can I help prevent poisoning accidents around the house?  
A: Number one, keep household products beyond the reach of youngsters and locked up when not in use. Never let them out of sight, even when answering the phone or doorbell.  
Also, keep items always in original containers, never in cups or soft drink bottles. Any one, especially children, mistake the liquid in pop." New candy, Avon poising drugs in front of children. They like to grow-ups. Clean medicine cabinet, ically and be sure safety packaging securely after every use.

**Pembroke Drug Center**

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God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

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