

AS I SEE IT



by
Bruce Barton

WE SAY DENY SPECIAL MEETING OF LREMC MEMBERSHIP

The Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation (LREMC) board of directors will meet April 18 to decide whether to allow a special meeting of the membership called for on April 28, according to a petition being circulated by a group calling itself the LREMC Action Group.

The special meeting of the membership would be for the purpose of throwing off the present and duly elected board of directors and replacing them with 12 picked by the small band calling itself the LREMC Action Group.

We say forthrightly "No!" Let those who do not like the composition of the board come to the annual meeting of the membership held each October and vote their convictions.

My good buddy, Al Kahn, the Great Pontificator of WAGR Radio, said in a Tuesday morning editorial that the board should allow the special meeting to take place in the name of "harmony." God help us if that is the way we are raising our children or running our electric cooperative. What happened when Europe and the rest of the world tried "harmony" as a way of avoiding war? Did "harmony" keep us out of war? Of course not. I am surprised that my friend, Al Kahn, would raise such a flimsy reason to have a meeting.

Do what is right, we say. Carl Branch, the spokesman for the action group and a number of others in the organization have admitted that they did not attend the annual meeting of the cooperative membership in October. It is too costly to allow them to have their very own "special" meeting in April. No, let them wait until October like the rest of us. Let democracy flourish.

And, in reviewing the petitions, we have noticed a number of irregularities and improprieties. That seems grounds enough to deny the petition, as we see it.

IT'S A BLACK'S TURN TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE ROBESON COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Robeson County is on the verge of turning its back on progress among the party faithful. Bobby Freeman, the White chairman of the party,

is lining up votes for another term in office. It seems that Indians in the western part of the county (especially in Pembroke) and others are intent on breaking a gentlemen's agreement presently in place that dictates that the chairmanship of the Robeson County Democratic Party will rotate among the races.

It is the turn of a Black Democrat to head the party. Whites should wait their turn like the rest of us. And Indians should not be part of a scheme to deny progress and peace in the democratic party.

As we understand it Rev. J.F. Cummings is the choice of the Black community. We ought to respect their wishes in the matter. And Freeman and others ought to get in line and await their turn. Rotation of the chairmanship has avoided a lot of blood letting in the past.

When Robeson County Democrats gather April 30 at the Lumberton High School we hope reasonable men (and women) of all three races will prevail and name a Black to head the party. Remember, it is the Indian's turn next.

CAN DAVID GREEN UNIFY THE ROBESON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION?

David Green, the Black chairman of the Robeson County Board of Education has been unable to unify the Robeson County Board of Education in the past. Will he be able to unify the board in the future? A 6-5 mandate is shaky and scary.

It is interesting that Indians have been unable to elect one of their own as chairman of a board that is predominately peopled by Indian students. Irony smiles forlornly upon us and mocks us.

Whose fault is it? We would say it is the Indian's fault. The Indian politician continues to be unduly bombastic and devious and, sometimes, works against his own best interest. The Indian psyche needs buttressing up, shoring up for future battles. This one is over.

David Green won democratically, 6-5. Let the Indian board members, and the rest of us learn from the experience, and go on and take care of the educational needs of our children. We say to the board of education (especially the 5 Indians who voted against Green and for Dr. Gerald Maynor) "dance"... and we say to Green, "It takes two to tango!"

Can David Green unify the

Robeson County Board of Education? We say probably not. But he ought to try. If he is unable to unify the board after a reasonable period of time he should consider stepping down and let someone else have a go at it.

Piano Spring recital

The piano students of Mrs. Mary F. Chavis, presented their 4th Spring Recital on March 20, at Pembroke State University, Moore Hall. The students performing were Bobby Ann Jones, Tammy Chavis, James Bowman Hunt, Kevin Lowery, Mary Elizabeth Sampson, Ronald Lowery, Shiela Lowery, Toby Blue, Kim Ivey, Karen Thompson, Chermika Thompson, Selena Chavis, Joan Jones, Carmela Kateri Lewis, Kelvin Strickland, Tammy Locklear, Cindy Lawson, Nakkia Hunt, Sean Hunt, Jeffery Hunt, Shannon Hunt, Vicky Barton, Chasity Oxendine, Annette Oxendine, Ginger Oxendine, Kim Locklear, Belinda Ann Oxendine, Tonja Kay Oxendine, Jerry Locklear.

A duet was performed by Kim and Jerry Locklear, special music was rendered by Mrs. Betty Oxendine and Carmela Kateri Lewis, students of Mrs. Sally Jones participating were Erica Rowdy and Landry McDuffie.

Public Health Week -cont'd from p-1

Walk-A-Thon Thursday, April 21, at 2:00 p.m. from Fyne Knit Mill's parking lot to the Health Department. --Open House Friday, April 22, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. --Annual "Run For Fun and Health," Saturday, April 23 beginning at 9:30 a.m. from Mohr Plaza to the Health Department.

Individuals who plan to participate in the events on April 21st and April 22nd should come early because all events will start on time. We do hope and anticipate great participation from all citizens in Robeson County.

Reprinted from April 13, 1983 News and Observer

Time to end parole secrecy

To the average North Carolinian, the meaning of a 1977 state law would seem clear enough. It requires that the Parole Commission "must publicly conduct its consideration of parole." Yet, the commission and its legal advisers believe that the law is satisfied merely by receiving citizens' comments in writing when paroles are pending. By going behind closed doors for the deliberations that actually determine whether paroles will be granted, the commission wrongly shields from public view the most critical aspect of its work.

Superior Court Judge James H. Pou Bailey made clear Monday that he has some trouble with the clarity of the law, but he tends to believe that the parole commission is misinterpreting legislative intent. Technically, Bailey upheld the commission in a lawsuit filed by District Attorney Joe Freeman Britt of Lumberton, who opposes the secret deliberations. But, in an aside, Bailey said he would have ruled differently in the case of a potential parolee had his crimes been committed after 1977. "I think the board of paroles will change their procedures," Bailey said.

However, Walter T. Johnson Jr., parole commission chairman, seems unconvinced that the Legislature's intent is as clear as Britt contends. Instead of guiding the commission toward more open proceedings, Johnson apparently will force another test case.

Johnson would be better advised to bring the commission's discussions and votes out in the open, especially in view of controversy over several paroles in recent years. Three such parole cases have had Robeson County connections.

In the first case, early parole was granted in April 1982 to former state trooper Hollis H. Britt, who served only two years of a 20-year sentence in the shooting death of his wife in Harnett County. Because of a procedural error, the commission failed to notify court and law en-

Letters To The Editor

Reader questions
Robesonian's coverage
of LREMC dispute

In my opinion, an alleged writer of the Robesonian, an alleged newspaper in Lumberton, NC, run an editorial on allegations made by Mr. Elias Rogers, pertaining to Carl Branch's LREMC Action Group.

Carl Branch and the LREMC Action Group since January 1, 1983 to March 31, 1983 has cost the LREMC members more than \$24,000. In added unwarranted expense. In my opinion, alleged writer of the Robesonian, an alleged newspaper of Lumberton, NC, this is not an allegation of LREMC Action Group waste, it is a statement of fact and public record.

Alleged writer of the Robesonian, an alleged newspaper of Lumberton, NC, you claim to take your stand in the middle of this LREMC issue or controversy. This is the proper position to take, but in my opinion, you should report and inform the readers of both sides of the issues if you have guts to do so. There is no confusion among the membership that has been informed on both sides of the issues. We of the LREMC Consumer Service group know this is a fact because we read about it in the *Carolina Indian Voice*

each week.

Alleged writer of the Robesonian, an alleged newspaper of Lumberton, NC, you speak of compromise between Elias Rogers, chairman of the Board of LREMC and Carl Branch LREMC Action Group. In my opinion, this is idiotic. Carl Branch made it clear that six(6) Indians and one(1) black should not remove Derl Hinson, a white as general manager of LREMC. In my opinion, Carl Branch still harbors the same thoughts and mind as he did when this happening occurred. Out of the other side of his mouth he wants his followers to believe his action is a result of excessive spending on behalf of the present board of directors of LREMC.

I have found Elias Rogers a respectable person and I am sure he has respect for Carl Branch, but Carl Branch will have to earn it.

P.S. Lets help Bruce Barton attain 5,000 subscribers by 12-31-83 to the *Carolina Indian Voice*, a complete newspaper that will bring to you the readers, both sides of any and all issues.

John L. Godwin
Pembroke, NC

Pembroke Skateland!

NEW BUSINESS IN TOWN!!!

...Pembroke Skateland. Pembroke-Dr. and Mrs. Reggie Oxendine are happy to announce a new business in Pembroke--Pembroke Skateland! The skating rink is expected to open next Wednesday, beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Look for more details next week. Pembroke Skateland is located on Railroad St. in Pembroke, next door to Pembroke Community Workshop in the facilities formerly housing Pembroke Furniture.

Said Dr. Oxendine, "We are going to run a good clean business where our youth can gather and have a good time in a positive and safe environment."

forcement officials in Harnett before allowing Britt to return on parole to his native Robeson County. The commission apologized for the oversight. Nevertheless, fuller public deliberation could have alerted officials who were opposed.

Judge Bailey and District Attorney Britt both objected in June 1982 when Ralph Hunt, a former Robeson County school board chairman, gained parole after serving only two months of an 18-month sentence for driving after his license had been permanently revoked. No advance notification was given to these court officials because the charge was a misdemeanor and carried a sentence of under four years. Again, a more visible parole proceeding would have given Bailey and Britt a chance to register their views.

In the most recent case, Britt protested an early parole eligibility date set for Gerald Bonner Hill. The former executive director of the Lumberton Housing Authority was convicted in 1981 on 19 counts of false pretense, bribery and conspiracy. He received a 7-10 to 10 year sentence, which was commuted last December by Governor Hunt -- an action to which Britt also objected. The district attorney argued that fuller public consideration of the Hill case was required by law. And Judge Bailey says he would have agreed with Britt except for the fact that Hill's crimes occurred before the 1977 law was passed.

Johnson and other commission members undoubtedly feel that they can debate and resolve paroles issues better in private session. The state Attorney General's Office, in fact, argued before Bailey that the Parole Commission should be allowed to deliberate as a jury does. But secrecy provokes a widespread suspicion of undue political influence in paroles and reduces public scrutiny of an important part of the criminal justice system. Therefore, the commission should open its key proceedings to the public.

EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGE

We Cannot Know Where We Are Going If We Don't Know Where We've Been...



So fittingly we honor our Pioneer Fathers

MEANDERING

WITH GARRY L. BARTON

I want to stand flat-footed and declare unequivocally: I am not now, nor have I ever been "lost." I'm referring, of course, to historians, anthropologists, and the like who refer to my ancestors as the "Lost Colonists."

That's right folks! I ascribe to the much-despised albeit much-substantiated theory that Lumbee Indians of Robeson County and elsewhere descended from the 119 English colonists who settled in the "New World" in the latter 1500's, better known as the "Lost Colony."

Don't get me wrong, friends. My Indian-ness is in no way contingent upon whether or not you (the reader), they (the legislators), or anyone else for that matter, gives credence to this theory. Indian-ness to me is a state of the heart. Not a state of the mind. So I don't mind what others think about my roots.

Here, in a nutshell, is what I, and countless other uneducated cats like myself, as well as a number of learned scholars, think happened:

Governor John White led a contingent of English adventurers to the "New World." They established a settlement and were soon befriended by Manteo, a Hatteras Indian whose tribe was located fifty miles further inland on Croatoan Island. No doubt, the colonists were glad to see a friendly red face for they were having trouble with a local tribe of Indians led by Powhatan. Gov. White had to return to England for supplies to replenish the colonists' dwindling stock. Well expecting trouble from the fierce Powhatan, White instructed his colonists to travel the fifty miles to Croatoan Island if trouble arose, realizing they would be taken in by the friendly Hatteras Indians. However, he told the colonists to leave him a clue as to their destiny should they be forced to leave the settlement. If leaving under duress the colonists were further instructed to mark an "X" on the sign telling where they were going.

Gov. White was unable to return to his colonists for a couple of years because Spain and England were at war. When he finally did return he found the letters "CRO" carved on a fence. The word "CRO-O-A-T-A-N" was found carved upon a nearby tree. However, no colonists nor an "X" indicating they left under distressful conditions were to be found.

But, according to Gov. John White's well-kept diary, he was not unduly concerned about the colonists removal from the settlement. If historians will read his diary they will find that there was no doubt in White's mind that the colonists had been taken in by the friendly Hatteras Indians of Croatoan Island. For a number of reasons, he was unable to sail on to Croatoan Island to check on the fate of the colonists. Now, some historians choose to believe that the colonists were wiped out by the fierce Indian Chief Powhatan, although no bodies were ever found. It appears to me that they are willing to believe anything concerning the fate of the colonists except what Gov. John White's diary infers--and that is that the colonists were taken in by the Hatteras Indians.

My children will probably never read this in their history books at school, so I'm going to tell you what happened after the colonists were taken in by the Indians. Historians choose the easy way out; they

Remember - these views are mine, they are not necessarily anyone else's; they aren't even necessarily views.

say the colonists were "lost." I dare to go further.

After years of intermarrying and co-habiting between the colonists and Indians, a very unique group of people came into being. Many sported blond hair and blue eyes, and other caucasian features. This fact notwithstanding, this group has clung to their Indian blood since their inception and called themselves Indians. It is from this group present-day Lumbee Indians descended. Perhaps these uniquely-different Indians were ostracized from the Hatteras Indians as their numbers grew. Perhaps. Admittedly I don't know the reason. But I do know this band of Indians eventually left the Croatoan Island area and migrated to the Robeson County area. Something to keep in mind is that the area along the Lumbee River was at one time nothing but swamps. Whites did not want the land, so it would have afforded a safe refuge for the Indians if they were ostracized.

Before you dismiss this theory as merely the rantings and ravings of a proud people without a culture of their own, you need to consult your history books. Evidently enough existed to prompt the Honorable and much-respected Hamilton McMillian to introduce legislation around 1885 to the N.C. General Assembly recognizing Robeson County Indians as Croatan (sic) Indians. The bill passed and became law. I might add that many Indians (especially the older ones) seem offended by being called Croatan Indians. I'm not knocking anyone, but I am not offended in the least if someone calls me a Croatan.

So, my friends, you see we are not "lost." And our ancestors were never "lost"--maybe temporarily misplaced but never "lost."

If you don't believe me ask the Ku Klux Klansmen who were routed from the Indians' stomping grounds in the 1950's. I dare say, when the lights came back on and the smoke cleared in the wake of the shooting, there were many non-Indians that fateful night who did everything in their power to get "lost."

Or consider our hero, Henry Berry Lowry. He waged a war against his white neighbors for almost ten years because of racial injustices his fellow Indians suffered. Even such white historians as Mary C. Norman whose husband was slain by the Lowry Gang are forced to admit that Henry Berry Lowry's cause was not "lost" although he faced seemingly insurmountable odds.

Or look at the beautiful and stately Old Main building on the PSU campus. With the spirit of Henry Berry Lowry coursing through their veins, local Lumbee Indians fought the university when their plans called for the demolition of Old Main, the only building in existence to house a four-year degree-conferring college for Indians only. After Old Main was gutted by fire many no doubt thought the Indians had "lost" their bid to save her. But they were wrong. She still stands today in all her glory--a lasting testament to the fiber and fortitude of a proud and courageous people who refuse to acknowledge the word "lost" in their dictionary.

I rest my case.

PSU student to direct play

PEMBROKE -- Keith Hight, a junior at Pembroke State University majoring in theatre, was selected by the theatre staff to direct the Pembroke Players religious production for the 82-83 season scheduled for April 14, 15, 16.

Keith is the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Hight of Fayetteville. He graduated from Terry Sanford High School in Fayetteville where he was active with the drama club and has worked with many productions, both on stage and back stage prior to this production.

Keith has directed two other one-acts: "White Lies," by Peter Shafer and "The Interview," by Jean Claude Van Italle.

The play chosen this semester is "The Diary of Adam and Eve," by Mark Bucci, adapted for the stage from a story by Mark Twain. The play is co-

sponsored by the PSU Theatre Program, the Baptist Student Union and the Methodist Student Organization.

For more information call 521-0778.

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

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