

WHAT NEXT???

READERS' FORUM

Ranting N' Raving

by Garry Lewis Barton

Lady, your letter that appeared in the March 17, 1988 issue of The Carolina Indian Voice outraged me, to say the least. It and you insulted me and my intelligence.

You say that the fact that mostly Indians were involved in another drug bust in the county "ought to open your people's eyes that Eddie Hatcher and Timmy Jacobs don't have a leg to stand on."

I say that at least Eddie Hatcher and Timmy Jacobs had enough guts and backbone to stand up for what they believe in. The fact that you (Mary Russ?) seemed hesitant about identifying yourself suggests to me that you are cowardly and spineless. And we all know that without the support of a spine one does not "have a leg to stand on."

You say that "they (Hatcher and Jacobs) tried to make it look like Sheriff Stone and his son are involved in drugs but it always seems like Indians are involved in easy ways to make money because I believe work scares you people."

I say you are guilty of a crime much more serious than seemingly being spineless. You evidently have taken a few isolated cases and judged an entire race of people by the actions of individual "Indians." This is called stereotyping, lady.

Now, I'm going to try and explain simple enough so that even a person of question intelligence (if the IQ fits, wear it) can comprehend it.

Suppose I were to gather the evidence garnered from your letter and arrive at a conclusion as to the type of person you are. Are you with me so far, lady?

So far we have gathered from your letter that you are cowardly and spineless. Remember this.

Now, bear with me. You said you believe "work scares you people." I take offense with your inference. I am 36 years old and joined the work force at the tender age of 13 delivering newspapers. Since I am a Native American, or one of "you people," as you so ineptly put it, this suggests to me that you are dishonest and a liar as well.

Saying "work scares you people" hurts even more when you take into account that it is coming from a member of a race of people whose ancestors were so lazy that they owned another race of people whom they used to do the work for them. Lady, considering the history of your ancestors, you ought to be ashamed to even think about calling other folk lazy.

So, now we have arrived at the conclusion that you are cowardly and spineless, as well as dishonest and evidently a liar.

Are you still with me, Mary Russ?

Now, since you are a white person, suppose I took characteristics of you garnered from your letter and judged the whole white race by you. In other words, suppose I jumped to the conclusion that all "you people" (white folk) are cowardly and spineless, as well as dishonest and liars.

I don't want to tax your mental faculties, lady. So I'll help you along a little. It would be wrong of me to judge all white folk by you. Just like it is wrong of you to judge a whole race of people (Native Americans) by the actions or characteristics of a few.

The truth of the matter is that there are bad apples in all races and walks of life. You seem to believe that Eddie Hatcher and Timmy Jacobs are a couple of bad apples in a barrel full of bad apples. That's okay, lady. I do not support your contention, but I support your right to express your views and sentiments, no matter how warped or unwarranted I feel them to be.

And, conversely, you should support my right to express my opinion that you are not only a bad apple, but you and your views and sentiments are rotten to the core.

But I am intelligent enough to know that all white folk don't act and think like you. In other words, all white folk are not bad apples, just like all Indians and Blacks are not bad apples.

I fear that you come from a family tree that has sick and unhealthy roots reaching back to the Civil War days. Or at least you apparently possess a Civil War mentality.

The danger lies not in you being a bad apple, but in you contaminating the rest of the apples in the barrel you come into contact with. You see, lady, blatant prejudice such as your letter implies, does not raise it's ugly head overnight. Oh, no! It began as a tender and open sore. It took many centuries of rotting and festering for it to become the infectious and cancerous wound it is today.

The sad fact is that every generation has folk like you who act as instruments to perpetuate the hatred and prejudice that came over with Columbus when white folk first invaded America. Your views and sentiments are perverted and sick, infecting the roots of your family tree. Unfortunately your mama probably taught you to think as you do. And you will probably teach your children. And they will teach theirs. And so on.

And you even have the audacity to refer to "some dumb Indians" in your letter. Lady, if your letter was used as a yardstick to measure your intelligence, your IQ would be found to hover in the low double figures.

And, furthermore, the "trouble" does not "always come(s) from Pembroke." The heart of the trouble comes from big bigots and racists like you who indeed seem to think that the "only good Indian is a dead Indian."

Well, I say to you, the only thing that needs killing and burying are the sick, perverted and warped views and sentiments you spouted out in your letter.

And you end your letter by saying, "I just hope you people wake up and if you don't like the honest hard-working officials we have then maybe you ought to just pick up your tepees and move west where you belong."

I end by reminding you, Mary Russ, that you are a trespasser and an invader in this fair country. Long before your ancestors arrived with their prejudice, bigotry and racist views, my ancestors were living in peace and harmony.

Oh Columbus was a lost sailor who thought he had found a shortcut to the West Indies. So when he arrived here he called the native inhabitants he found here "Indians." And "Indians" have been treated like a joke ever since.

It's small wonder many Native Americans fail to see the humor anymore.

When folk like you stop looking down their noses at other folks, then, and only then, will we all be able to live together in peace and harmony as it should be.

Indeed, if anyone is leaving, perhaps folk like you should return to England where you belong. And pick up your prejudice and take it with you.

Someone once said, "teach a slave to read and he will refuse to remain a slave," or something to that effect. This is true. Back during the Civil War era court clerks wrote the word "colored" beside an Indian's name. This reflects what white folk thought of Indians back then.

But today Indians have learned how to read. And we have learned also to read between the lines in order to detect condescension. And your letter, Mary Russ, reeks of condescension. And racism. And prejudice. And bigotry. And everything evil and unhealthy.

For God's--and all people's--sake, lady! Get your nose out of the air and bring it down to earth. Stop and smell the roses. And stop trampling through the rose garden of life.

Given the recent reported events which involve Sheriff Hubert Stone, a couple of "his" deputies, and his son, we do not see how anyone can continue to support the Sheriff.

Citizens in Robeson County must wonder why only small-time drug pushers are continuously caught but the big drug dealers seem to "outsmart" our law enforcement officers every single time? Don't you wonder where all these drugs are coming from and what "upstanding citizens" in our midst our supplying drugs to these expendable, small-time pushers? We are not impressed with the arrest of twenty or thirty small-time pushers and users of drugs. We realize this only takes attention away from the king-pins of drugs in our county. It is time to let Hubert Stone know that he is not fooling anyone. Why are major drug dealers free to continue business as usual and why do they escape so easily?

Do the citizens of Robeson County choose to disregard the letter written on behalf of a major drug dealer by Sheriff Hubert Stone? Why would Sheriff Stone choose to write such a letter when a major drug dealer from Robeson County was finally captured? Are the supporters of Sheriff Stone absolutely sure this is the only time our Sheriff has assisted such individuals? Sheriff Stone says he does not remember writing the letter on behalf of the drug dealer now in prison in Florida. What else has Sheriff Hubert Stone forgotten? Perhaps the supporters of Sheriff Stone feel that he wrote only one such letter; if so, are they not curious why our Sheriff choose this particular individual to assist? Do they fail to realize this drug dealer will probably be back in our county within the year as a result of assistance from at least two "law enforcement officials"? What motivated "law enforcement officials" to write on behalf of a convicted drug dealer? In our opinion, the citizens of Robeson County will continue to suffer and Robeson County will continue to be a haven for drugs and big time drug dealers as long as we maintain the current leadership we have in law enforcement. Hubert Stone can do more to fight continued violence and drugs in Robeson County; he can do more to improve law enforcement by resigning and spending his time fishing or pursuing some other such hobby!

When one looks at the honest, down-to-earth, hardworking examples of good law enforcement we have had in the Sheriff's Department in previous years, men like Mr. Ralph Purcell, Mr. Elmore Stanton, Mr. Greg Sampson, and Mr. Jim Thompson just to name a few, how can we settle for anything but the best? These men set an example of what we should expect from law enforcement officers and what we deserve!

We currently have many good law enforcement officers in Robeson County! Their hard and unselfish work is being overshadowed. Most are struggling to make a living in one of the most dangerous professions that exists. Many face a variety of dangers and temptation every day. We may lose these individuals if we do not express our gratitude and respect for their sacrifices. We must support these individuals by holding their leadership accountable. Because of the actions of the leadership many citizens distrust our county law enforcement officials. Even though Sheriff Hubert Stone was elected by a majority the last time he ran for election, that does not preclude legitimate questions from the citizens of Robeson County. Sheriff Stone chooses to ignore the problems and hope they will go away. His stance is irresponsible. His incompetence is apparent! Too many things have occurred that demand explanation and our justice system sits idly by allowing things to escalate.

Sheriff Hubert Stone obviously does not remember many things. One thing he will soon learn is that he is accountable to all the citizens of Robeson County!

As the Save Our School group continues to their efforts to nullify the will of the people, we look forward to the long, hard work ahead. The Public Schools of Robeson County will face many crucial decisions. First and foremost, who will be our next superintendent? How will we insure a good quality education for all of the children of Robeson County? Your vote was but the beginning step. The process begins April 1, 1988.

WHAT NEXT???

Mary Russ Invited On Tour Of Robeson County

To the Editor

The recent letter to The Carolina Indian Voice from "Ms. Mary Russ of Lumberton" was very troubling. Although the letter made many angry, it also hurt a great deal of good people. Perhaps that is what "Ms. Mary Russ" hoped to achieve.

I feel pity for "Ms. Mary Russ of Lumberton" because her views closely mirror the views of the Nazis of World War II and the Ku Klux Klan of recent years. Unfortunately, some people still choose to condemn a race of people based on the actions of one or two individuals of that race. She fails to realize that recent comments and reports about Sheriff Hubert Stone pply speak of him, not to the entire race of whites in our county and so her anger has lead her to strike back in a most vile and hateful way. I hope to show "Ms. Mary Russ" how wrong she is about the Indian people.

First I would like to invite her to come to Pembroke and then I will take her throughout Robeson County, all expenses paid. Judging from the tone of her letter, she will be surprised! I will take her to the schools where she will witness Indian children who are just like black and white children. They cry when they are hurt; they bleed when they fall and scrape their knee. They don't always do their homework. They dream and hope; they laugh, run, and play. She will also see Indian, black, and white teachers working to help our children get the best possible education.

I will take "Ms. Mary Russ" to several Indian businesses so she can witness the hard-working people who try to make ends meet, just like their black and white brothers and sisters. She will see Indians working hard to make a living and working hard to provide goods and services to all people.

I will take her to several industries in every town in Robeson County where she can witness Indians working hard side by side with blacks and whites. She will probably be surprised to see the number of Indian supervisors.

I will take her to the fields where she will witness the Indian farmers planting crops to feed all people. I will take her to several farms throughout Robeson County where she will see many Indians, blacks, and whites working together to plant and later harvest the crops that fill our grocery stores.

I will take her to the Pembroke Police Department where she will see Indian policemen at work trying to make the town a better place to live. I will introduce her to Indian deputies of the Robeson County Sheriff's Department so she can see that Indians also attempt to fight the drug problem and other various crimes in our county. They only need good leadership so their efforts are not overshadowed.

I will take her to several volunteer fire departments to witness Indians, working hand in hand with blacks and whites to protect property in Robeson County.

I will take her to Southeastern General Hospital where "Ms. Russ" can see the number of Indians who provide medical and other professional services to care for the sick without regard to race.

I will carry "Ms. Russ" to Indian churches where she will see the strong faith of Indian people in Jesus Christ and his message for the world. "Ms. Russ" can witness for herself as Indians, blacks, and whites worship and take fellowship together.

I will take her to various restaurants in Robeson County where Indian waitresses, owners, cooks, and so forth provide food for the people of Robeson County.

I will take her to Pembroke State University where she will see many whites, blacks, and Indians enjoying the benefits of a good college education due to the foresight, ingenuity, and commitment of Indians.

I will take her to Robeson Community College where she will see Indian instructors, students, secretaries, and support staff serving all the people of Robeson County.

I will take her to Indian homes where she can witness for herself that Indian people are no different from any other people in the world. She can witness the problems, the dreams, the unity, the pride, but above all, the love!

"Ms. Mary Russ of Lumberton", whoever and wherever you

are, that is my message to you. You will meet the Indian doctors, lawyers, teachers, secretaries, social workers, farmers, law enforcement officers, firemen, and other various hard working Indian people in Robeson County. Though you provoked some anger and though your letter will lead some astray and assist forces that attempt to divide that race known as the human race, I will pray for you and hope that someday you will come to see that our creator made people of many races. In my Bible it says that God looked at his handiwork and it was good!

Ms. Russ, please meet me at the Pembroke Police Department on April 16, 1988 at 11:00 A.M. We will begin planning our journey then. Do not allow your hatred to consume you. Our journey will open your eyes and mind, but above all, it will open your heart and touch your soul!
Lilburn Murray
Pembroke, N.C.

WEAKNESS BRINGS

DEFEAT

To the Editor
Many of our people have become fearful and weak, being herded like stray cattle into stalls of corruption and oppression. Fenced and held captive on lands that are rightfully ours. But just as stray cattle are easily roped, many heads of cattle are powerful and do not feel the sting of a thorned fence. I shall seek out my stray brothers, with love and concern, and united we shall stampee the thorns of injustice and once again hold claim to the green pastures and mighty rivers of freedom we once knew.

Eddie Hatcher
Tuscarora Indian
Cumberland County Jail

MARY RUSS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH McDONALD'S

To the Editor
Please inform your readers that Mary Anne Rust did not write the article that appeared in your newspaper on March 17, 1988. The author of the letter in question, Mary Russ, is not or has never been associated with McDonald's of Lumberton.

Mary Anne Rust
404 Brookgreen Drive
Lumberton, NC 28358
738-4769

When You Least Expect It, Expect It

To the Editor
In rebuttal to your bigotted and racist articles, I have personally decided to take it upon myself to put you and your kind in your place, which by the way is nowhere on our native soil. Than God that we, as natives and as Indians, have the integrity to not stereotype the entire white race because of the narrow-minded views of some. However, by your remarks it is easily discernable that you are proud of being white and that you consider your kind to be superior to others. Well being a racist white American means having dirt poor, disease-ridden ancestors who came out of the slums, were undesirable

Continued on Page 8

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Editor's Note
We received a call from Danny Russ who is a detective with the Lumberton Police Department. Detective Russ said, "please let your readers know that my mother, Mary Russ, has been deceased for two years."
"Whoever Mary Russ is that wrote the letter to the Carolina Indian Voice, she was not the wife of Woodrow Russ of Lumberton," he continued.
Detective Russ stated further that he and his family had received several phone calls relative to the letter. They wish to say publicly that they have no animosity towards Indians. And they regret the incident, but they had nothing to do with it.

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