

WHAT'S NEXT???

As previously reported, the death of Mr. Billy McKellar in the Robeson County Jail on January 12, 1988 has been investigated by Governor Jim Martin's task force. This task force was chaired by Mr. Phil Kirk, the Governor's Chief of Staff. The task force seemed to 'walk the middle ground' in its report, but nevertheless took the Sheriff's Department to task for failing to perform its duty adequately. Needless to say, Sheriff Hubert Stone strongly disagreed with the task force's report. Stone attempted to salvage some of his reputation by relying on his own, apparently, contrived "facts." Stone's opinion of the task force's report is obviously a protective reaction because it contradicted Stone's so-called investigation. Hubert Stone attempted to whitewash the events that led to Mr. McKellar's death and as a result, his credibility has suffered yet another blow!

We have learned to cringe when Sheriff Hubert Stone investigates and reports the "truth." It has become painfully obvious that Stone's investigations are inept, to say the least, and always clear the actions of his son, deputies, friends, and department. Everything is always rosy to hear him tell it. His department is superhuman and never, never does anything wrong.

But, the Governor's Chief of Staff, Mr. Kirk, stated in the McKellar report: "There was neglect but we couldn't fine any reason to suggest that it was intentional. We didn't see any criminal intent, just neglect of duty."

One thing troubling us about this matter, other than the needless death of Mr. McKellar, is the task force failed to entertain or investigate the possible basis for this "neglect of duty" by Robeson County Sheriff's Department. The McKellar death in the Robeson County Jail was not an isolated event. Several people have died in jail. And before we hear from some elements in our society we ask they remember: Mr. Billy McKellar has only been arrested. He had not been tried or convicted of any crime! He was waiting for his day in court. Thanks to the Sheriff's Department justice was subverted.

Is the "neglect" we have witnessed in the Robeson County Sheriff's Department and in the operation of the Robeson County Jail symptomatic of a lack of training, lack of professionalism, lack of funds or a blatant lack of concern and respect for the justice system and the citizens of Robeson County? Is this "neglect" fairly representative of the attitude of the Sheriff's Department towards inmates? Was the fact that Mr. McKellar was a minority responsible for the "neglect" he received? What action has Sheriff Stone taken against the individual(s) who neglected to do their duty?

We fail to see how the Governor's Task Force could investigate this cause without doing some work to address some of the questions above. Hopefully, the task force will reconsider its investigation and come back to Robeson County for a further, in depth look at the personnel, policies, practices, and procedures of the Robeson County Sheriff's Department and its operation of the Robeson County Jail. Sheriff Stone is not happy with the task force's report so do you think he will initiate change? The task force's job is not over. We still need help! How many more must die of this "neglect?"

"The assumption that a lot of people seem to be making is that Joe Freeman Britt is not an honest prosecutor. I don't know of anything to substantiate that."

James R. Trotter

General Counsel of Gov. Martin

Perhaps Mr. Trotter has heard the old saying, 'where there is smoke there is fire.' We wonder why our District Attorney does not take advantage of the opportunity to talk with attorneys who represent individuals claiming to have information about corruption and drug dealing in Robeson County. Just recently, Mr. Alan McSurely, an attorney in Orange County, stated he had a client willing to provide information about corruption in Robeson County if he received immunity from prosecution. Mr. Britt could meet and talk with Mr. McSurely and his client and grant immunity only if the information was valuable or worthwhile. It would seem to us that an aggressive district attorney, who was genuinely interested in cleaning up Robeson County, would jump at the chance to receive information that would assist in this effort. Why Joe Freeman Britt chooses to sit back and ignore the situation is beyond us. Perhaps that explains Trotter's observation: "the assumption that a lot of people seem to be making is that Joe Freeman Britt is not an honest prosecutor." Will continued inaction by our District Attorney substantiate Trotter's observation? We wait and wonder!

CONGRATULATIONS TO REV. ELIAS ROGERS

To the Editor: Congratulations to the Rev. Elias Rogers who has succeeded in winning another battle to regain his position on the LREMC Board of Directors. I sincerely believe as do many others that Rev. Rogers should now have some freedom from troubling emotions, innuendos, and distortions of what happened at the October 6, 1987 election.

It is amazing to us and sometimes even arouses our sympathy how some people, even board members seemingly forget Rev. Rogers long sacrifices. These sacrifices were made for all of us. I want everyone to know one thing specifically, we have devoured each other long enough. And you can believe that I have already asked the same questions you did: are we, the consumers, going to have to pay all these uncalled for legal fees, etc. I say this without an apology, these unnecessary bills should be paid by the ones who have caused the problems. We all know, and I have stated before, Rev. Rogers is the match that started the fire. He made it possible for minorities to be able to serve on that board. He made it possible for an Indian

Advertisement for Pembroke Drug Center, featuring Pharmacist Howard Brooks and contact information: Pembroke Drug Center, 521-4806.

Advertisement for Sunshine Farmers Take Caution, warning about skin cancer and providing contact information for Violet Locklear at Route 1, Pembroke, NC.

Advertisement for Sunshine Your Pharmacy, featuring a cartoon character and the text 'Farmers Take Caution'.

REV. MAC LEGERTON RESPONDS "TAKING WORK MORE SERIOUSLY & OURSELVES LESS SERIOUSLY"

To the Editor:

In the past, we have shared concerns and constructive criticism of the Robesonian for printing so-called "facts" before completely checking out the facts. Now, I find myself having to write the Carolina Indian Voice and file a similar complaint. As I said to those at the Robesonian in the past, it is easy to check the facts out when the will to do so is present. The printing of falsehoods, misrepresentations of facts, and the manipulation of facts by not telling the whole story is an irresponsible action for any newspaper.

The facts of May 16 are:

1) There was no one at the Gathering Place at 7:45 pm when I came to open it for the 8:00 pm Monday night meeting. You stated plainly that there were "approximately 40 people gathered outside the Gathering Place."

2) There was only one thing at the Gathering Place - a note taped to the door saying the meeting was at the Tuscarora Offi Office. You failed to mention this fact altogether.

3) When I rode by the Tuscarora Office, the cars and people were all there. So when I got to the Gathering Place, saw the sign, I continued home with my three children.

These are the facts, simple and to the point. Your description is a total distortion of these facts. On top of this, I am criticized and drug through the mud. You analyze my attitude and question my integrity based on your perception of the facts. You neither contacted me about what happened nor asked me about my intentions. It seems that you wrote what you felt based on the information you received without checking it all out.

Mohandas Gandhi, who along with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will undoubtedly go down in history as the two most influential men in the 20th Century, worked, spoke, and wrote alot about nonviolence and social change. Gandhi explained that the people would eventually learn that nonviolence was the best strategy and moral basis for social change. He said that the hardest thing for people to learn is "civility", meaning how to be civil towards one another. This, he said, was harder to learn than nonviolence. In recent years, we have focused a tremendous amount of energy and attention on "injustice out there in ole Robeson." While we continue this effort, we must begin just as strong and just as serious an effort to improve our "values in here." We talk alot about the code of conduct and values we want from officials. We must now do the same with ourselves and do it with honest, self-evaluation. What do we want the code of conduct and values to be of justice-minded leaders, professionals, organizers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, managers, laborers, teachers, principals, etc.? What does it mean to be civil to one another when the official code of conduct is based on so much

dog-eat-dog relationships, politics based on favors, and divide and conquer tactics? While we complain about such a system, our personal and professional relationships often exhibit the same conduct.

We must change. We must learn how to share our feelings face-to-face instead of throw judgements and rumors at each other. We must learn how to build community better than we know how to tear each other down. So many people don't want to get involved in improving their communities because of what their friends might say or do, not their enemies. We must all take a good, long look in the mirror and see how we encourage disunity, distrust, and victimization among each other. Finally, there is a new hope among the people of Robeson County, in spite of our recent tragedies and sufferings. People are beginning to believe that good people can now get into politics because there will be good people supporting them. In the past, many good people have even shied away from voting because they said politics is all dirty. Politics is only dirty because we've let it get dirty instead of standing up for the good. Yes, it's easier to stand up against the bad in others than to stand up, support the good that is in ourselves, and help that good to grow.

I think the solution is to start taking our work more seriously and ourselves less seriously. There will always be conflicts, personality differences, and differences of opinion in community. We are not told to like everything about each other but rather to love each other. In the final end, how we change and are able to relate to each other more effectively will determine if we are winners or losers.

Sincerely, Rev. Mac Legerton

Finds D.A.'s Comments Inappropriate & Insulting

To the Editor:

The recent comment attributed to Joe Freeman Britt after his defeat in the May primary was, in my opinion, inappropriate and insulting to the citizens of Robeson County and to the memory of Julian T. Pierce. I also believe Mr. Britt's comment reveals a great deal about the character of the man who seems destined to become a superior court judge as a result of a flaw in the election law.

Mr. Britt came in second on that day in May because more people still chose to vote Julian Pierce. Needless to say, this

had to wound the ego of Mr. Britt, a man who has never faced real opposition in an election. In this instance however, Mr. Britt faced real opposition for the superior court judgeship and even after the untimely death of Julian Pierce, that opposition held and actually grew!

Mr. Britt was obviously surprised and embarrassed to discover he had won the judgeship but lost the election to Mr. Pierce. How could he explain his defeat? How could he save face?

Joe Freeman Britt chose to dismiss the vote and will of the people of Robeson County by stating most people voted for Julian Pierce merely out of sympathy. Do you not find this statement somewhat strange? Is it not a self-serving statement from a man with a wounded ego who refuses to face reality?

Apparently, if one chose to believe Mr. Britt's explanation, the citizens of Robeson County are not very committed to certain principles and ideals so that is why they voted for Julian Pierce. I wonder how many of Joe Freeman Britt's supporters changed their minds and voted for Julian Pierce out of sympathy? These have to be the voters Mr. Britt is characterizing because, in my opinion, no supporter of Julian Pierce would change his mind and vote for Joe Freeman Britt. Mr. Pierce's supporters wanted change. They had had enough of "justice" under Joe Freeman Britt! In my opinion, Mr. Britt's "sympathy" explanation for his primary defeat is an insult to the intelligence of the citizens of Robeson County and is merely and attempt to nurse his wounded ego.

You see Mr. Britt, the availability of a candidate to take office does not automatically make him the best man for the job. The character of the candidate, the principles he represents, and the hope for a better tomorrow guides many voters. In my view, when voters made the comparison between Julian T. Pierce and you, the choice was obvious. The vote of the people of Robeson County reflected that choice even though their candidate could not serve.

Mr. Britt, you have my sympathy! But even so, you will not receive my vote in November! I will not compromise my principles especially to one so inclined to insult my intelligence.

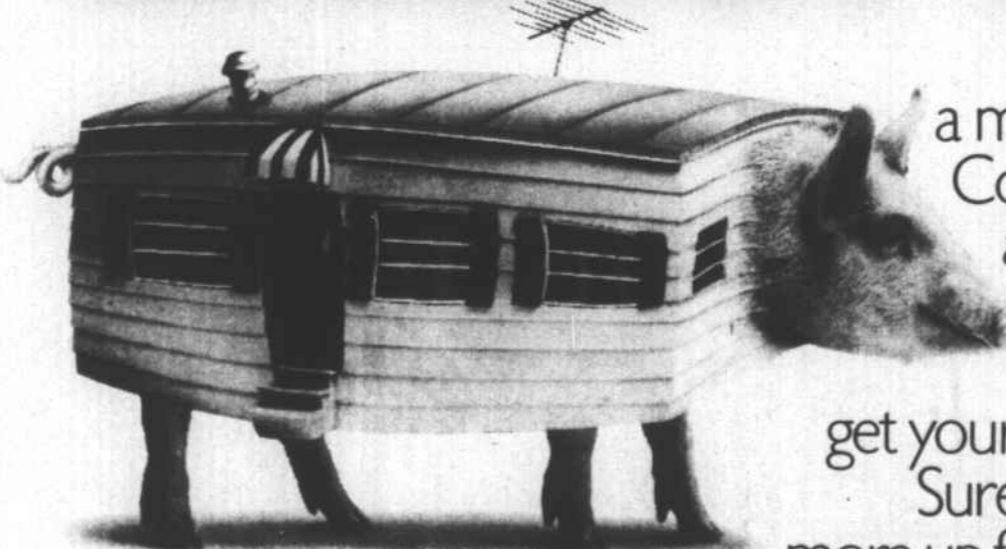
Lilburn Murray Pembroke, NC

Advertisement for The Carolina Indian Voice, including contact information: Say You Read It In The Carolina Indian Voice Call 521-2826 To Subscribe.

Say You Read It In The Carolina Indian Voice



WILL YOUR NEW MOBILE HOME BE AN ENERGY HOG?



Buy anything less than a mobile home with CP&L's Common Sense Package and chances are you'll end up squealing like a you-know-what when you get your energy bill every month.

Sure, these homes cost a bit more up front than ordinary mobile

homes. But you'll save 30 to 40% on your heating and cooling costs. Not to mention the 5% discount you'll get from CP&L every month. Winter, spring, summer and fall.

Plus, these homes feature energy-saving appliances, storm windows, extra insulation and more. Why you may find you'll even sleep better in a home with CP&L's Common Sense Package, just knowing it's built better than the average mobile home.

Why be a glutton for punishment? Stop feeding these hungry energy hogs and insist on the Common Sense Package when you buy your new mobile home. And don't let anybody talk you out of it.

