

# WHAT NEXT???

On Tuesday night Superintendent William Johnson of the Public Schools of Robeson County "told" the board of education that he was going to form a task force to look at the possibility of establishing a school for problem students. And what did our board members say? ...As usual, nothing was said to discourage this beginning of segregation of students. We will wager that when those alternative schools are established, only Indians and Blacks will be determined to be "discipline problems." We suggest that the board of education members, especially Blacks and Indians, pay close attention to what is really going on. The groundwork has been slowly put in place to return our system to a segregated situation, in our opinion. The idea of a separate school for "problem" students brings us to these questions: who will administer this "segregated" school site? Who will determine what a "problem" child is? And why is Major David Green, a Black, expounding on a theory as though it were already a fact? We do not suggest that there are no discipline problems in our system. But again, why punish the students? Why not search for the underlying reasons for these problems and seek solutions that do not result in the perpetuation of keeping minority students below the norm.

If you doubt what we say about the race of the students who will end up in the alternative school, consider this information from the Affirmative Action Plan of the Public Schools of Robeson County. According to the system's own documentation there are 5,640 white students in the system (as of April 1990) or 24.1 percent; 6,948 Blacks, or 29.7 percent; and 10,693 Native Americans, or 45.7 percent. (Now we need to say here that their own documentation says that their figures for the population are based on the 1980 census. We do not know if they have updated this document. Nevertheless, twelve years later the Affirmative Action Plan for our school system is clearly not quoting from accurate population figures.) There is another matter for the board of education members, especially Indians to get serious about. Stop playing games with our educational future and our economic future.

Employment figures in this document show: Management positions with this racial breakdown: fifty percent white; 25 percent Black and 25 percent Indian. Principals: 34 percent white; 29 percent Black; 37 percent Indian. Teachers: 633 white or 49 percent; 265, or 20 percent Black; 401 or 31 percent Indian. Supervisors: 42 percent white; 18 percent Black; 40 percent Indian. Other professionals (whatever that means): 40 percent white; 19 percent Black; and 57 percent Indian. Aids: 26 percent white; 31 percent Black; 43 percent Indian. Technicians: 44 percent white; 12 percent Black; 44 percent Indian. Clerical/ Secretarial: 45 percent white; 11 percent Black and 43 percent Indian. Service workers: 17 percent white; 34 percent Black; and 49 percent Indian. Does this speak volumes? We again urge the board of education to stop playing politics with our children's future.

While they have compiled this information, the question is when are they going to right this wrong? The administration, staff, and faculty, not just service workers, should reflect the racial makeup of the student population.

One of the games they are seemingly playing right now is the hiring of a permanent director for the exceptional childrens program. Some board members have said that the Black board members are holding off on filling this position until they get a Black with the credentials to be director. Another board member has said that the interim director is proving daily that he can't handle it. Well, again we raise these questions: if the interim director can't handle it, why not get someone who can? Prior to making this decision, each board member needs to look at the racial makeup of the students in the exceptional program. We have not seen these figures, but we are willing to wager that the overwhelming majority are minority. If the Blacks board members consider that position to be an opportunity for Blacks to increase their rightful employment percentages, that is fine. But just say so. While people of all colors are playing the political game, our children still suffer. I again refer you to the above figures so that everyone understands who is suffering. Where are you concerned members of the board of education? We have been told over and over again that nothing will change in the school system for the better until after the election. We are a little tired of this propaganda. Nothing will change until some board member gets serious about students and demand that the necessary and right changes take place immediately.

We promised to speak to the LRDA board of directors some more this week. So here goes. The following board members are elected in districts: Gerald Strickland, William Lowry; Leroy Scott; Bobby Dean Locklear; Grover Oxendine; H. Dobbs Oxendine, Jr.; Dorothy Lowery; James (Sonny) Sampson; Virginia Jacobs; Wendell Lowery; Adolph Blue; Patricia Hunt; Sylvia Locklear; and Michael Locklear. That is fourteen people. A. Bruce Jones who is also executive director of the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs; Rod Locklear who resides in the Washington, D.C. area; and Burlie Locklear from nearby Hoke County are appointed to the board of directors by their fellow board members. We believe that these appointments should be stopped. We believe that they should all be accountable to the election process. We believe that A. Bruce Jones appointment to the board of LRDA is a conflict of interest because of his duty with the Commission. But to expand on this complicated situation, these three appointments brings the board total to seventeen. Then there is the matter of the Land Trust Committee whose names appear on the transactions for land and businesses. We understand that this committee is permanent due to the fact that they are not going to be transferring land to anybody. These are Adolph Dial, A. Bruce Jones, Kenneth Maynor (former executive director of LRDA) and Rod Locklear. That gives us nineteen members of the LRDA board. Do you see anything wrong with this picture? We certainly do and in view of some of the literature that is being distributed by the LRDA, we will share some more interesting thoughts with you next week. Think on this in the meantime. What happens to the "tribal property" in the event of the death of one or all of the Land Trust Committee.

# Along The Robeson Trail

By Dr. Stan Knisk, Director PSU Native American Resource Center

Last week we looked at the concept of "culture areas," and then reviewed the cultures of the Arctic, Sub-Arctic, and Northwest Coast. This week we turn southward, down the western side of North America, to three more culture areas.

The Plateau culture area is one of the smallest geographically. It includes parts of British Columbia (Canada), northern Idaho, western Montana, northwest Oregon, and east-central Washington State. The traditional people of this area can be placed into two broad language families: the Salishan (which includes such nations as the Shuswap, Okanagan, Kalispel, and "Flatheads"); and the Sahaptin-Klamath (which includes Cayuse, Nez Perce, Yakima, and Modoc). In the long centuries before European influence came to the Plateau, these Indian people depended heavily on fish, especially salmon, for food. They also hunted small game, and collected wild plant foods, with particular emphasis on roots (which were boiled, roasted, or baked as bread). The Plateau cultures were influenced considerably by their neighbors of the Northwest Coast and the Plains.

Immediately south of the Plateau is the Great Basin culture area. The Great Basin is a large, mostly arid, region which includes parts of Orgeon, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Arizona, and California, plus most of Utah, and all of Nevada. The people of this culture area include the Paiute, Gosiute, Chemehuevi, and Washo. These sparsely distributed people were semi-sedentary, moving from place to place as local food resources became available. Their major sources of food were roots and seeds, with common use of pinon nuts. They also took rabbit, antelope, and any other animal they could find,

with the exception of the coyote (who was important as a symbolic connection to the spirit world).

South of the Great Basin lies the huge Southwest culture area, which includes southern Utah and Colorado, western Texas, most of Arizona, all of New Mexico, and northern Old Mexico. The Southwest was traditionally two sets of cultures which partially overlap. In the northern section live the Pueblos, the best known of whom are Hopi and Zuni (although there are about two dozen other groups). These people are settled farmers, cultivating corn, beans, and squash.

Outside the stone and adobe Pueblo buildings, and in the southern and western sections of the Southwest culture area, live Piman-speaking groups (such as the Pima, Papago, and Opata); and Yuman-speaking groups (Havasupai, Yavapai, Mohave, and others). Both Piman and Yuman people were traditionally agriculturalists, although much less so than the Pueblos; these non-Pueblo Southwest tribes were more dependent on gathering of wild plant foods than their Pueblo neighbors.

Sometime roughly 1,000 years ago, these Southwest nations were joined by Athabaskan-speaking people migrating down from the north. These migrants came to be known by their Southwest neighbors as Navajo, Apache, and Lipan. These relative late-comers to the Southwest were originally hunter/gatherers in Canada, but many of them took to farming under the influence of the Pueblo and other Southwest cultures.

In the next segment we will look at the Plains and California culture areas. For more information, visit the Native American Resource Center on the campus of Pembroke State University.

# READERS' FORUM

## Out-of-state Lumbee urges Bush's support for Lumbee Bill

To the Editor:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter I sent to President Bush in regards to the Lumbee Recognition Bill. I am forwarding you a copy for possible inclusion in your paper.

The example of my letter may serve to inspire others to write letters to the President. The decision may rest with one person, our President. With the dismal outlook for his approval, our efforts to sway his opinion via letters must be increased. If each Lumbee wrote to the President, this would be a small investment of time on the part of each person. This small investment could mean benefits for present day and future Lumbees far beyond the time it takes to write a letter. Letter writing is a powerful tool for

us at this time!

My story is different than those who live in Robeson County but my concern for the Lumbee people is just as strong. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,  
Calvin J. Gavin

Dear President Bush,

As you may know, the Lumbee Indian bill has passed the House, the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, and will soon be on the floor of the Senate. I am writing to urge you to support this bill! I have a rich

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DEAR FRIENDS: Are you aware that the Lumbee recognition bill has passed the House, and the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, and will come up on the floor of the Senate soon? After years of frustration, we may get our recognition instated. However, the word is that the White House will veto the bill. To prevent that happening, you need to write today to: President George Bush, The White House, Washington, DC 20505 and tell him to sign the Lumbee Bill. Thank you very much. Dr. Dean Chavers, Albuquerque, NM

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